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**THE EAGLE IN THE DESERT: THE ORIGINS OF THE
U.S.–SAUDI ARABIAN SECURITY PARTNERSHIP**

by

John S. Hancock

September 2015

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

James A. Russell
Anne M. Baylouny

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SECURITY PARTNERSHIP**

John S. Hancock
Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 2005

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Author: John S. Hancock

Approved by: James A. Russell
Thesis Advisor

Anne M. Baylouny
Second Reader

Mohammed M. Hafez
Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

The United States and Saudi Arabia share a robust and complex security partnership today. This thesis explores the origins and development of U.S.-Saudi security cooperation between the late 1920s and early 1960s. During this time, U.S. leadership began to incorporate ideological objectives into their once largely analytical foreign policy. Scholarly historical literature, first-hand accounts of U.S. officials and government documents reveal that what once began as a business relationship in the 1930s rapidly developed into a security partnership designed to defend against the threat of Soviet communism by the 1950s. Initially interested in Saudi Arabia because of its oil, the United States began to view the kingdom with increasing geostrategic importance during the early Cold War while Saudi Arabia simultaneously benefited from U.S. military assistance for protection against regional threats. This thesis provides historical evidence and analysis of how U.S.-Saudi security cooperation helped the United States reach both its analytical and ideological goals in the past, which suggests that value exists in continuing this relationship today, despite the many challenges that it currently faces.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ARAMCO	Arabian American Oil Company
CASOC	California Arabian Standard Oil Company
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CRS	Congressional Research Service
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IPC	Iraq Petroleum Company
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
MDAA	Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement
NIE	National Intelligence Estimate
OPC	Office of the Petroleum Coordinator
PCC	Palestinian Conciliation Commission
SOCAL	Standard Oil of California
SSNP	Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party
USMTM	United States Military and Training Mission

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I. INTRODUCTION

The United States and Saudi Arabia share a robust security partnership today that incorporates military training, assistance and advice to increase Middle Eastern regional security while strengthening diplomatic relations between the two countries.¹ Both states continue to look to one another for regional leadership and defense assistance against existing and future security threats in an increasingly unstable area.² This thesis examines the history of U.S.-Saudi relations and asks: How did the U.S.-Saudi security partnership originate and develop from the late 1920s through the early 1960s, and how did this relationship help the United States reach its security goals?

A. IMPORTANCE

In late 1990, the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) deployed to Saudi Arabia to take part in Operation Desert Storm in response to Iraqi regional aggression. On February 24, 1991, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Frank R. Hancock, the 1/327th Infantry Battalion led the division in the execution of the largest helicopter assault that had been conducted to that day.³ The purpose of the assault was to establish Forward Operating Base (FOB) Cobra, which would serve as a launching pad for the 101st to both infiltrate the Euphrates River Valley and cut off Iraqi forces in Kuwait from accessing their supplies along Highway 8 the following day.⁴ Saudi Arabia provided key support for the 101st in the months leading up to the assault in exchange for U.S. military protection; throughout the fall of 1990, the 101st provided military defense for Saudi Arabia as the division rotated its battalions through King Fahd International Airport

¹ “United States Military Training Mission: Home,” United States Military Training Mission, accessed October 5, 2014, <http://usmtm.org/>.

² Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmidt, “Saudi Arabia Will Grant U.S. Request for Anti-ISIS Training Program,” *New York Times*, September 10, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/>; Colin H. Kahl, Melissa G. Dalton, and Matthew Irvine, “Atomic Kingdom: If Iran Builds the Bomb, Will Saudi Arabia Be Next?” Center for a New American Security, February 2013, 18, http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_AtomicKingdom_Kahl.pdf.

³ Frank R. Hancock, “North to the Euphrates: Part One: The Taking of FOB Cobra” (study project, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1993), 2, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a265085.pdf>.

⁴ Hancock, “North,” 1.

(Camp Eagle II), which functioned as a major staging point for the operation.⁵ Saudi Arabia played a critical support role for the United States in this operation, and the United States reciprocated by offering military defense.

Camp Eagle II represents just one of many instances during 70 years of diplomatic relations in which security interests drove the United States and Saudi Arabia to work together. Since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the Middle East's political, economic and security landscape has changed drastically, driving U.S. leaders to rethink their conventional diplomatic and military approaches to the region. The current instability in the Middle East presents Washington with a vast array of challenges: Al-Qaeda and other non-state extremist groups, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), constant regime changes, civil wars, new spikes in Israeli-Palestinian tensions, uncertainty over Iran's nuclear intentions and others. In addition, recent shifts in U.S. domestic petroleum production have challenged Saudi Arabia's traditional role as the major oil supplier to the United States, begging the question: Does the United States have an economic reason to remain heavily involved in Middle Eastern affairs at all?⁶ Amidst the many challenges that the United States faces in the Middle East today, historic *raison d'être* for standing U.S. policies and partnerships in the region are often downplayed. Neglecting the history of U.S. interaction in the Middle East can prevent U.S. leadership from grasping the greater context in which many U.S.-Middle East problems lie.

Today, the United States and Saudi Arabia continue to share a complex security relationship that includes both militarily strategic and economic elements. For instance, the two countries still adhere to the United States Military Training Mission (USMTM) of 1953, which was designed to protect the "common interests of the United States of America and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia while strengthening [their] strategic partnership."⁷ Recently, Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow "moderate Syrian opposition

⁵ Hancock, "North," 2, 3.

⁶ Summer Said, "Saudi Arabia Cuts All January Crude Oil Prices to U.S., Asia," *Wall Street Journal*, December 4, 2014, <http://online.wsj.com/articles/saudi-arabia-cuts-all-january-crude-oil-prices-to-u-s-asia-1417700645>.

⁷ "United States Military Training Mission: Home."

fighters” to train within its borders as part of a U.S.-led international effort to confront and combat the spread of ISIS.⁸ Economically, the United States signed a trade agreement with Saudi Arabia in 2003 that was designed to “enhance the historical bonds of friendship and spirit of cooperation between the two countries” and “develop further both countries’ international trade and economic interrelationship.”⁹ Through both military and economic cooperation, the United States and Saudi Arabia are critical to each other’s security strategies.

Recent presidential administrations have emphasized the crucial role that Saudi Arabia plays in helping the United States reach its security objectives, but many argue that the costs of cooperation with the kingdom outweigh the benefits. Human rights abuse accusations against the Saudi government have caused members of Congress to question the moral justification of continued support for the kingdom.¹⁰ Furthermore, today’s global security environment is markedly different from the early twentieth century’s, when the U.S.-Saudi security relationship began. Threats posed by radical Shi’ites and a potentially nuclear Iran, among others issues, have supplanted the West’s fears of Soviet communist expansion that dominated the Cold War period, and critics today often accuse Saudi Arabia of sponsoring radical Islamic terrorism aimed directly at the United States.¹¹ The United States continues to cooperate with Saudi Arabia economically, but developments in domestic oil production suggest that foreign oil is losing its hold over the U.S. petroleum market. While the aforementioned 2003 trade agreement emphasizes the United States’ commitment to maintain strong economic ties to Saudi Arabia, U.S. economic activity reveals that the United States is rapidly shedding its dependency on foreign oil—in 2014, only 27 percent of petroleum consumed by the United States came

8 Gordon and Schmitt, “Saudi Arabia Will Grant U.S. Request of Anti-ISIS Training Program.”

9 “Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Concerning the Development of Trade and Investment Relations,” Office of the United States Trade Representative: Executive Office of the President, July 31, 2003, http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/agreements/tifa/asset_upload_file304_7740.pdf.

10 Christopher M. Blanchard, *Saudi Arabia: Background and U.S. Relations* (CRS Report No. RL33533) (Washington, DC, Congressional Research Service, 2015), summary page, <http://fas.org:8080/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33533.pdf>.

11 Thomas Hegghammer, “Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization in Saudi Arabia,” *Middle East Policy*, 13, no. 4 (2006): 39, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/59752958?accountid=12702>.

from foreign countries, which was lowest percentage since 1985.¹² Furthermore, the United States is incorporating oil into its export economy, and in 2011 U.S. petroleum exports outnumbered imports for the first time since 1949.¹³ Trends suggest that the United States will continue to incorporate oil exports as a major part of its economy; in 2014, the United States exported over 1.5 billion barrels of crude oil, finished petroleum products, natural gases and other liquids—400 million barrels more than in 2011.¹⁴ Many older arguments for strong security and economic cooperation with Saudi Arabia seem to be crumbling as a result of changes that are occurring within U.S. foreign policy and economic goals.

Has a strong relationship with Saudi Arabia ever proven to be a valuable asset to U.S. national security interests? If so, what historical evidence supports this argument? Analyzing the history of U.S.-Saudi security relations can reveal if and how a partnership with Saudi Arabia has helped the United States reach its security goals in the Middle East in the past, and may suggest how strong diplomatic ties with the kingdom will do so both today and in the future.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on the history of the U.S.-Saudi security partnership offers numerous explanations as to why this relationship began and how it initially developed. Most experts agree that economic motivations—the search for foreign oil by civilian companies in the 1930s—initiated interaction between the United States and Saudi Arabia, but many scholars place different emphasis on the factors that contributed to the security aspect of the relationship. To analyze the competing factors that drove the United States and Saudi Arabia into security cooperation, it is necessary to break these elements down into their historical context. This section explores various historians' explanations

¹² “How Much Oil Consumed by the United States Comes from Foreign Sources?” U.S. Energy Information Administration, last updated March 12, 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/tools/faqs/faq.cfm?id=32&t=6>.

¹³ “U.S. Petroleum Product Exports Exceeded Imports in 2011 for First Time in Over Six Decades,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, March 7, 2012, <http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=5290>.

¹⁴ “Exports, Petroleum and Other Liquids,” U.S. Energy Information Administration, accessed April 10, 2015, http://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_move_exp_dc_NUS-Z00_mbb1_a.htm.

and exposes possible gaps in the existing literature by examining three time periods: the 1920s and 1930s, World War II and the early Cold War.

1. The 1920s and 1930s

The first major interaction between the United States and the modern kingdom of Saudi Arabia began between U.S. oil businessmen and Saudi Arabia's first king, King Abdel Aziz bin Abdel Rahman al-Faisal al Saud, or Ibn Saud. Oil discoveries in southwestern states such as Texas led to an overproduction of domestic oil by U.S. companies, making it difficult to understand why U.S. firms began to look for oil overseas. It is also particularly unclear how these companies began to cooperate with Saudi Arabia. To better understand how initial contact between these two entities resulted in a security partnership between the U.S. and Saudi governments, this section compares and contrasts literature regarding the United States' search for foreign oil and Ibn Saud's leadership in the decades prior to World War II.

a. The Search for Foreign Oil

Despite an excess in U.S. oil production, many domestic oil companies in the 1920s and the 1930s suffered, while U.S. companies operating overseas and international companies managed to avoid such a fate. In the 1920s and 1930s, both U.S. and international oil companies were producing in excess, which drove the price of oil down and increased domestic competition, destroying many smaller oil companies and threatening the survival of larger ones. As a result, the United States introduced several state and federal policies that banned collusive practices during this time. Michael B. Stoff contends that the absence of similar regulations in—and the simpler structure of—the world oil market led international companies to cooperate, ensuring their firms' survival during the global depression. Stoff's argument explains why the local economy and domestic policy would drive U.S. companies to search for oil overseas during the Great Depression, but he offers little as to how the United States became interested in Saudi Arabia in particular.¹⁵

¹⁵ Michael B. Stoff. *Oil, War, and American Security: The Search for a National Policy on Foreign Oil, 1941–1947* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 8–9.

In her book *Thicker than Oil*, Rachel Bronson provides more detail on how and why the United States began its economic partnership with Saudi Arabia in the 1930s. Bronson notes how a British monopoly on Middle Eastern oil reserves in Iraq, Turkey and Saudi Arabia resulted in a strict agreement between British and U.S. oil companies that discouraged signatories from embarking on new enterprises in the region.¹⁶ Additionally, the agreement prevented companies that refused to sign from operating in areas that were known to be profitable at this time such as Iraq. Remaining outside of the agreement, Standard Oil of California (SOCAL) began to dig and soon struck oil in Bahrain in 1932. Convinced that more oil could be found in Saudi Arabia, SOCAL entered competition with the British oil companies over negotiations with the Saudi king, Ibn Saud, for concessions in Saudi Arabia. After a few years of successful drilling, Ibn Saud, driven by both financial debt and a fear of British imperialism, granted SOCAL a 440,000 square mile oil concession from the Saudi king to CASOC in 1938. While Stoff explains why U.S. companies began to search for oil outside of the U.S., Bronson reveals how these companies entered an economic partnership with the Saudi Arabia.¹⁷

b. Saudi Leadership

William A. Eddy suggests in “King Ibn Saud: Our Faith and Your Iron” that Saudi leadership played an equally significant role as petroleum did during the early phases of U.S.-Saudi relations. Eddy depicts Ibn Saud as both a savvy businessman and a charismatic political leader whose efforts brought modernity to a financially poor and superstitious population within a relatively short period of time. An astute politician, Ibn Saud was able to convince both his own people and the United States government that a U.S.-Saudi partnership served the best interests of all parties, and he cleverly reconciled technical innovation with religious fundamentalism for even his most apprehensive subjects. Overall, Eddy highlights the significant role that Ibn Saud’s personality played during early U.S.-Saudi relations, and the scholar illustrates how Saudi leadership helped

¹⁶ Rachel Bronson, *Thicker than Oil: America’s Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 14-17.

¹⁷ Bronson, *Thicker*, 16–19.

to pave the political and economic paths that the Saudi Kingdom would follow for decades.¹⁸

Daniel Silverfarb argues that, while Ibn Saud received significant financial backing from Great Britain prior to World War II, the Saudi king also feared the British. Ibn Saud depended on the British for financial support, but he also complied with them because he dreaded a hostile British reaction should Saudi Arabia reject their support. Such a reaction, Ibn Saud feared, could include a British military invasion or British inspired internal revolts. While Silverfarb's article deals little with U.S.-Saudi interaction specifically, he offers additional insight into Ibn Saud's decision-making processes that Eddy fails to mention. Eddy's article mostly highlights the positive characteristics of Ibn Saud's leadership, but Silverfarb reveals Ibn Saud's dependency on foreign assistance to maintain power while exposing the Saudi king's distrust of his leading financier: the British.¹⁹

2. World War II

In the years surrounding World War II, the role of national security increased in the U.S.-Saudi security relationship. Believing that Saudi Arabia's geostrategic location and oil would assist the United States in achieving its military objectives during the war, Washington began to incorporate the kingdom into its national security strategy. U.S. administrations took advantage of existing ties built by U.S. oil companies with the Saudi government to engage Ibn Saud diplomatically. This section will examine literature that discusses how Saudi Arabia's oil and geographic location caused the U.S. government make Saudi Arabia part of its national security strategy during World War II.

In his book *Blood and Oil*, Michael T. Klare argues that oil drove U.S.-Saudi relations during World War II. He highlights a pivotal document issued by the U.S. government relating to U.S.-Saudi relations—the Foreign Petroleum Policy of 1944, which called for “the substantial and orderly expansion of production in the Eastern

18 William A. Eddy, “King Ibn Saud: Our Faith and Your Iron,” *Middle East Journal* 17, no. 3 (Summer 1963): 257, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4323607>.

19 Daniel Silverfarb, “Britain and Saudi Arabia on the Eve of the Second World War,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 19, no. 4 (October 1983), 410.

Hemisphere sources of supply, principally the Middle East.”²⁰ Klare also offers valuable insight into the origins of Washington’s role within the private U.S. oil industry; he describes how Harold Ickes, Head of the Office of the Petroleum Coordinator (OPC), failed to buy out CASOC’s concessions in Saudi Arabia for the federal government—a move that had the full backing of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the Navy Department. Klare writes that Washington and private U.S. companies retained a strong “public-private partnership” in which “the government’s primary role in the partnership was to be the maintenance of security and stability in the major oil producing regions.”²¹ Klare’s primary argument is that oil is and has always been the driver of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

Michael Stoff’s book *Oil, War, and American Security* reveals how the U.S. federal government incorporated Saudi oil into its foreign policy between the years 1941 and 1947. Stoff writes that President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s desire to mobilize private American oil companies to support U.S. participation in World War II led to the creation of the OPC.²² Roosevelt’s forward-leaning approach toward the federal government’s role in the oil industry resulted in a stronger diplomatic relationship between the United States and the Saudi kingdom. Concerns over oil depletion in the Western Hemisphere and the need for the natural resource to support the American military during World War II drove Roosevelt to integrate Saudi Arabia into the Lend-Lease Act in 1943.²³ Stoff emphasizes how World War II marked the beginning of a new phase in the U.S.-Saudi relationship in which “oil joined with pressing strategic incentives,”²⁴ tying economic concerns to security interests between the two countries.

Stoff also introduces another contributing factor to the development of the U.S.-Saudi security relationship around the time of World War II: geostrategic interests. Stoff

20 Michael T. Klare, *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America’s Growing Dependency on Imported Petroleum* (New York: Owl Books and Henry Holt, 2005), 30.

21 Klare, *Blood*, 35.

22 Michael B. Stoff, *Oil, War, and American Security: The Search for a National Policy on Foreign Oil, 1941–1947* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 17–18.

23 Stoff, *Oil*, 73, 58.

24 Ibid., 61.

emphasizes that the British saw much more value in Saudi Arabia than just its oil. He remarks that “the whole Middle East was virtually a landbridge that traversed imperial lines of supply and communication. Keeping those lines open was important in time of peace; during war, it was essential.”²⁵ Bronson complements Stoff’s argument that Saudi Arabia’s location played a significant role in World War II, affirming that the U.S. State Department began to press for an airfield in Saudi Arabia because of its position on supply routes to Japan.²⁶ While the transportation and weapon systems of the major militaries in World War II depended on oil, which Saudi Arabia could provide, the kingdom’s significance grew among U.S. leadership because of its geographic location as well.

3. The Cold War

In the minds of U.S. and Soviet leaders, the Cold War was fought over conflicting ideologies as much as it was for power.²⁷ Existing literature offers various explanations as to why the United States and Saudi Arabia continued to cooperate with each other during the early stages of this conflict. While oil remained a major driver of continued U.S.-Saudi security cooperation following World War II, many historians argue that ideology and geostrategic interests also helped shape the relationship.

a. Oil

In “Oil and the American Century,” David S. Painter argues that oil served as the primary driver of the U.S.-Saudi security relationship during the Cold War. Like Stoff, Painter articulates how foreign oil access became intricately connected to U.S. national security, emphasizing the role that oil played in supporting U.S. military transportation and weapon systems.²⁸ Noting that the United States led the world in oil production prior to its entry into World War II, Painter contends that the United States’ increased

²⁵ Ibid., 44.

²⁶ Bronson, *Oil*, 24.

²⁷ Melvyn Leffler, “The Origins of the Cold War, 1945–48,” in *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 81–83.

²⁸ David S. Painter, “Oil and the American Century,” *Journal of American History* 99, no. 1 (June 2012): 28, doi: 10.1093/jahist/jas073.

dependency on Middle Eastern oil after the war caused Washington to take a vested interest in the stability of the region.²⁹ Painter argues that “the importance of oil to U.S. goals led the nation to take an active interest in the security and stability of the Middle East.”³⁰ Contrary to other scholars, Painter seems to reject the idea that ideology played a significant role in the U.S.-Saudi partnership, suggesting that oil remained the primary motivation for continued U.S. foreign relations in the Middle East throughout the Cold War.

b. Ideology

Some scholars argue that ideology played a major role in strengthening the U.S.-Saudi security relationship following World War II. Rachel Bronson contends that, while oil might have provided the initial push for U.S.-Saudi relations, “religious identity” played an equally critical role in the ongoing development of this partnership during the Cold War.³¹ Competition between the West and Soviet Russia had a polarizing effect on ideologies throughout the world during this time. In the case of the United States and Saudi Arabia, shared fears of communism caused both countries to overlook their disagreements over religion’s relationship to the state. While freedom of religious expression in the United States contrasted with the implementation of Sharia law in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi government favored cooperation with the United States because it still allowed the practice of any religion; Soviet Russia opposed religion altogether. Bronson points out that scholars often ignore the binding role that religion played between the United States and Saudi Arabia in the middle of the twentieth century, arguing that the hostility toward religion and religious freedom demonstrated by Soviet Russia “established a strong foundation that supported close relations [between the United States and Saudi Arabia] at the highest political levels for decades.”³² Although Bronson mentions that ideology contributed to the early development of the U.S.-Saudi security

²⁹ Ibid., 26.

³⁰ Ibid., 28.

³¹ Bronson, *Thicker*, 23.

³² Ibid., 27.

relationship, her overarching argument in *Thicker than Oil* is that ideology was just one of many contributing factors in the forging of a very complex partnership.

Peter L. Hahn builds upon Bronson's argument that ideology played a critical role in U.S.-Saudi relations. Although Hahn does not specifically mention Saudi Arabia in his article "Securing the Middle East: The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957," he highlights the significance of ideology in U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East in the 1950s and beyond. "The Eisenhower Doctrine's precedent of using military force to stop the spread of communism outlived the Eisenhower Doctrine,"³³ he writes. Hahn argues that Eisenhower had the Middle East especially in mind when he was developing the Eisenhower Doctrine. The president feared that the decline of British influence in the Middle East following the Suez-Sinai War would cause Arab regimes to fall victim to Soviet influence, and Eisenhower believed that he "must accept new responsibilities for the security of the Middle East."³⁴ This belief, Hahn argues, led to the creation of the Eisenhower Doctrine.³⁵ Hahn's article supports Bronson's argument that ideology helped shape the early U.S.-Saudi security relationship by putting it in the greater context of U.S. policy in the Middle East in the 1950s. Hahn makes no mention of what might have drawn the Saudi government to the ideology of Eisenhower Doctrine however, but Bronson possibly fills this gap by suggesting that religion served as a leading motivator.

c. Geostrategic Interests

Saudi Arabia and the United States, written by Parker T. Hart, is a first-hand account of U.S.-Saudi relations during the mid-twentieth century. Hart served as Consul General to Saudi Arabia from 1949 through 1951 and U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia between the years 1961 through 1965, and he held various other high-ranking Foreign Service positions throughout the Middle East. Hart's work provides unique insight into government level U.S.-Saudi interaction during an era in which the Cold War, the Yemeni Civil War, the Nasser regime, and the escalating Israel-Arab conflict greatly

³³ Peter L. Hahn, "Securing the Middle East: The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March, 2006), 38, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552745>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

affected U.S.-Saudi security relations. Hart's work describes, in great detail, lesser-known historical events in U.S.-Saudi security cooperation that took place under the Kennedy administration, including the 1963 talks facilitated by U.S. diplomat Ellsworth Bunker and Operation Hardsurface. *Saudi Arabia and the United States* is valuable to this thesis because this primary source provides detailed coverage of events often omitted in secondary scholarly works. Hart argues that the security aspects of U.S.-Saudi relations are tied directly to global economic interests and deserve heavy consideration by U.S. policy makers, describing the partnership as "an alliance of armed force to protect responsible custody of the world's single greatest source of oil."³⁶ Additionally, Hart provides detailed accounts where cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia resulted in increased regional stability in the Middle East. Through this cooperation, the United States managed to offer protection to Saudi Arabia from its regional foes, which in turn buttressed Saudi loyalty to the United States and prevented Soviet influence on the peninsula.

The literature presented thus far provides a great amount of information and analysis on the events that contributed to the forging and strengthening of the early relationship, but it does not draw any conclusion on how this knowledge can be applied to issues surrounding U.S.-Saudi cooperation today. To provide such an analysis, this thesis will take into account issues that both threaten and strengthen the current relationship. I will examine the historical aspect of the U.S.-Saudi security partnership and attempt to determine whether any comparable patterns exist between the late 1920s through the early 1960s and today. Through analysis of how security cooperation served the interests of the two countries in the past, I will explore whether and how such a partnership can continue to help the United States and Saudi Arabia reach their security goals.

³⁶ Parker T. Hart, *Saudi Arabia and the United States* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998): 9.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESIS

The U.S. Constitution offers little guidance regarding the subject of foreign alliances and partnerships other than prohibiting U.S. states from entering alliances individually.³⁷ In his Farewell Address in 1796, George Washington stated that “it is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world,” adding, “taking care always to keep ourselves by suitable establishments on a respectable defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.”³⁸ While Washington’s Farewell Address does not serve as a governing document for the United States, it does reflect the attitudes of many early U.S. leaders regarding foreign alliances and partnerships. Historians have called Washington’s Farewell Address “the fitting culmination of Federalist writings on the subject of government, politics, and foreign affairs,” contending that it contains the “essence” of Alexander Hamilton’s thoughts on these subjects in writings such as *The Federalist*, the “Pacificus” and the “Americanus” papers.³⁹

Norman A. Graebner argues that two competing approaches have helped shape U.S. foreign policy since the country was founded: *ideological* and *analytical*. In the *analytical* approach, “foreign policy serves the nation,” while the *ideological* approach “views external affairs largely in philosophical and psychological terms.”⁴⁰ Graebner argues that, during the early history of the United States, the central government largely favored the *analytical* approach in its foreign policy, and early U.S. officials tended to reject the idea of permanent alliances based solely on ideologies such as “prevailing political, social and religious beliefs” largely as a reaction toward European politics of that day.⁴¹ Throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which Graebner regards as a period governed by the *analytical* approach toward U.S. foreign policy, the

37 “The Constitution of the United States,” The Charters of Freedom, accessed July 7, 2010, http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html.

38 George Washington, “Washington’s Farewell Address 1796,” Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, accessed July 10, 2015, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp.

39 Norman A. Graebner, *Ideas and Diplomacy: Readings in the Intellectual Tradition of American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 73.

40 Graebner, *Ideas*, vii-viii.

41 Ibid., ix.

United States avoided formal alliances, with the exception of the 1778 Treaty of Alliance with France. Furthermore, the United States' experiences in its alliance with France, particularly during the XYZ Affair, left the U.S. government apprehensive of future formal alliances for a long period of time. The lack of respect shown to the three U.S. envoys by French Foreign Minister Marquis de Talleyrand, including his attempt to bribe them, played a contributing role in both the dissolution of the United States' alliance with France in 1800 and the United States' unwillingness to enter into another formal foreign alliance with any country until the early twentieth century.⁴²

Graebner holds that the United States maintained an *analytical* approach until the end of the nineteenth century when President Woodrow Wilson began to incorporate the ideals of American exceptionalism and universal self-determination into his foreign policy.⁴³ The historian argues that, after Wilson's presidency, American leaders increasingly used an *ideological* approach when determining foreign policy strategy and objectives. The relatively easy military victories of the United States during the end of the nineteenth century, such as the Philippine-American War and the Spanish American War, allowed U.S. politicians to argue that ideologies such as democratic government and freedom of expression were the leading causes of the United States' success, rather than its power.⁴⁴ Graebner criticizes officials like John Foster Dulles for promoting the idea that triumph over the Soviet Union would result from the "spiritual weakness of the Soviet system itself," not diplomatic or political action.⁴⁵ The lack of diplomatic effort on the part of the United States in conjunction with its *ideological* approach toward diplomacy, Graebner argues, resulted in an American foreign policy so hostile toward the Soviet Union and China that negotiation between the United States and the two countries was nearly impossible by the mid-1950s.⁴⁶

42 "The XYZ Affair and the Quasi-War with France, 1798–1800," U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, accessed July 10, 2015, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1784-1800/xyz>.

43 Graebner, *Ideas*, ix.

44 Ibid., 796.

45 Ibid., 801.

46 Ibid., 853.

Was the early U.S.-Saudi relationship strictly based on the role of oil in the U.S. economy, or did it also help the United States and Saudi Arabia reach their security goals? Do Graebner's claims that ideology drove much of post-Wilsonian U.S. foreign policy through the early to mid-twentieth century apply to the U.S.-Saudi security relationship? To analyze the origins of the U.S.-Saudi security partnership, this thesis will begin by examining the first interactions between the two countries—which were based on oil—and explore how the relationship developed within the framework of Graebner's *analytical* versus *ideological* approaches to U.S. foreign policy.

I hypothesize that, in addition to oil, U.S. geostrategic interests also played a major role in the development of the early U.S.-Saudi security partnership as the threat of Soviet influence in the Middle East increased. Beginning with the first interactions between U.S. oil companies and the newly recognized state of Saudi Arabia in the late 1920s, this thesis examines the origins of the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia as they relate to national security prior to and during World War II and in the early phases of the Cold War. Additionally, I explore what modern-day issues may affect ongoing security cooperation between these two countries.

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II. THE 1920S AND 1930S: OVERSEAS OIL

Saudi Arabia is one of the United States' oldest Middle Eastern security partners, and the origins of this relationship date back prior to World War II, when the British and French still controlled much of the Levant, and Israel was not yet a state. Initially, the quest for foreign petroleum by American civilian oil companies brought the United States and Saudi Arabia in contact with one another, but the resulting partnership quickly grew into one based on much more than oil trade.

The United States, alongside Great Britain, played a substantial role in both the survival and prosperity of Saudi Arabia in the years immediately following the Kingdom's founding by its first king, Ibn Saud. Domestic oil policies, U.S. competition with the British and Saudi leadership all contributed to the early formation of the complicated relationship that exists between the United States and Saudi Arabia today.

A. DOMESTIC POLICIES

The U.S.-Saudi relationship originated in the 1920s when U.S. civilian oil companies began to search for oil overseas.⁴⁷ Both the federal government and the oil companies knew that North America had plenty of the natural resource—80 percent of the Allies' oil during World War I came from the United States.⁴⁸ By the 1920s, many members of the U.S. government shared a growing concern that the high rate of production would soon strip the continent of most of its oil.⁴⁹ By 1931, U.S. companies were producing oil from the southwestern states at a swift rate, driving the cost per barrel down to 10 cents, a relatively low price for that time, which allowed for rapid consumption.⁵⁰ In 1920, the United States provided nearly two-thirds of the world's oil supply, and the rise in automobile use in the United States at this time indicated that the demand for oil within U.S. borders was only likely to grow; the number of registered cars

⁴⁷ Bronson, *Thicker*, 15.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Stoff, *Oil*, 8.

in the United States rose from 3.4 million in 1916 to 23.1 million by the late 1920s.⁵¹ State governments tried to curb production through legislation but ultimately failed, and companies continued to overproduce, shipping their excess “hot oil” across state lines where their state governments had no jurisdiction.⁵² In response, the federal government introduced legislation that prohibited “collusive practices,” but the end result only contributed to the success of larger U.S. oil companies operating overseas.⁵³ Many of the restrictions imposed on domestically operating U.S. oil companies fell under Roosevelt’s New Deal, which was “aimed at restricting production and stabilizing prices.”⁵⁴ Increased commercial competition due to overproduction of oil, the complexity of the domestic oil business structure and restrictive state and federal policies under the New Deal offered more ease to the larger American oil companies operating outside the U.S. borders.⁵⁵

B. BRITISH COMPETITION

Although Great Britain relied heavily on the United States during World War I to fuel the Royal Navy, the British also held their own oil fields in the Middle East.⁵⁶ By the late 1920s, a British firm called the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) possessed a near monopoly on known Middle Eastern oil sites in Iraq, Iran and other states outside of Saudi Arabia in the Gulf.⁵⁷ In 1929, Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony-Vacuum sought access to Middle Eastern oil sites controlled by the IPC and ultimately appealed to Washington for assistance, due to the British government’s reluctance to share investments with the American businessmen.⁵⁸ The U.S. Department of State intervened on behalf of the American oil companies by negotiating a settlement called the Red Line

⁵¹ Ibid.; Painter, “Oil,” 25.

⁵² Stoff, *Oil*, 8.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁶ Bronson, *Thicker*, 15.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 15, 16.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 16.

Agreement, which awarded 23.75 percent of British oil concessions to Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony-Vacuum.⁵⁹ The companies did not have to press the State Department too hard for assistance in negotiating with the British. The perceived ungrateful actions of the European country annoyed Washington, especially after the United States had provided substantial energy assistance to the European power during the First World War.⁶⁰ With the help of the federal government, U.S. civilian oil companies were able to break the stronghold that the British had held on Middle Eastern oil up to that point. The Red Line Agreement is significant in the history of U.S. interaction in the Middle East for two reasons. First, the Red Line Agreement resulted in the first American oil enterprise in the region. Second, it marked the beginning of a partnership between Washington and the American oil companies that continues to shape U.S. policy in the Middle East today.

The IPC forbade its new American partners to search for oil outside of those regions delineated by the Red Line Agreement, and, because of this, another U.S. oil company, Standard Oil of California (SOCAL), chose not to enter the agreement.⁶¹ As a result, SOCAL was prohibited from drilling in Iraq, which drove the company to look south where it soon struck oil in Bahrain in 1932.⁶² As soon as the IPC received the news of SOCAL's discovery, the British company moved swiftly to exploit it, and both firms began to compete for the favor of the new Saudi king, Ibn Saud, since the discovery of oil in Bahrain led many to suspect that more oil could be found in nearby Saudi Arabia.⁶³ Prior to 1932, many believed that most of the Middle East's oil lay outside of Saudi Arabia, and it was upon SOCAL's discovery that the United States and Great Britain began to engage in fierce competition over the Saudi kingdom's natural resource.

Before SOCAL's discovery, Saudi Arabia's early economy depended largely upon religious pilgrimages, which were declining in the early 1930s due to the worldwide

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 17.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

effects of the Great Depression. Ibn Saud needed an economic boost to help his new kingdom survive. Given the relatively recent colonial history between the Great Powers of Europe and the Middle East, the king was highly cautious of making deals with Great Britain. As a result, in 1933, the king granted SOCAL 60 year concessions in exchange for £35,000 sterling in gold and an additional £20,000 within eighteen months, along with other royalties, making SOCAL the first American company to own a chief oil zone in the Middle East. Out of the Saudi Arabia-SOCAL concession a new company emerged, which titled itself the California-Arabian Standard Oil Company (CASOC). CASOC struck oil at the American oil site Dhahran in 1938.⁶⁴ The company paid Ibn Saud \$1.5 million for the discovery, and, in turn, Ibn Saud increased CASOC's concession by 80,000 square miles to 440,000 square miles—a domain that covered over half of Saudi Arabia.⁶⁵ CASOC began pumping 11,000 barrels per day in 1939, and by 1949 the company was producing over 477,000 barrels a day, which was roughly five percent of world production at the time.⁶⁶ Highly suspicious of British imperialism in Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud chose to invest in a lasting partnership with the Americans in the hopes that such a deal would both save his failing economy while allowing him to keep political autonomy over his kingdom.⁶⁷

C. THE GREAT KING

Saudi Arabia's oil fields provided the conditions to turn Saudi Arabia into a wealthy country; but like many other developing Middle Eastern states in the twenty and twenty-first centuries, natural resources benefited a country only to the extent that its leadership knew how to use them. Ibn Saud was a shrewd businessman and a brilliant politician. Not only did the Saudi king have a thorough understanding of international politics and Saudi Arabia's strengths and weaknesses within that world, but he also understood his people and had an exceptional talent for leading through persuasion, rather than coercion.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Klare, *Blood*, 31.

⁶⁷ Bronson, *Thicker*, 14.

While a visit to the modern cities of Jeddah or Riyadh today might not make it readily apparent, the newly formed kingdom of the House of Saud in the early to mid-twentieth century was comprised of a largely uneducated population who lacked basic technical skills. Saudi inhabitants at this time practiced some form of Islam, but a level of superstition also permeated their belief system, and many people believed that technology was inherently evil.⁶⁸ Resistance toward modernization presented a major challenge for Ibn Saud as he tried to introduce technology and scientific developments into Saudi society.

Recognizing the importance of spirituality in his people's lives and believing that modernization was key to the survival of his kingdom, Ibn Saud cleverly devised ways to reconcile Islam, technological innovation and active participation in Western trade in a way that many Middle Eastern countries' leaders still struggle to do today. For instance, Ibn Saud encouraged the incorporation and use of the telephone in the Saudi government, hoping that it would strengthen the crown's central authority and help eliminate lawlessness. Many of Saudi Arabia's religious leaders opposed the use of the device however, believing that when people used the telephone, Shaytan (Satan) and the djinn transported human voices through the air.⁶⁹ To allay his subjects' anxieties, Ibn Saud had two imams, one in Mecca and the other in Riyadh, read from the Qur'an to each other over the telephone. The witnesses who heard the Qur'an through the telephones remained convinced of the evil nature of the device until Ibn Saud directly referenced the religious text to support his own position, arguing "does it not say that the devil and his cohorts cannot pronounce even one word of our Holy Book? This miracle therefore is not of the devil but of nature."⁷⁰ Ibn Saud's imagination and leadership skills enabled him to convince his people to accept other technology as well, such as the camera, which many Muslims believed promoted idolatry.⁷¹ The king's empathy toward his subjects' religious beliefs, his astute recognition of the benefits of modernization and his strong leadership

68 Eddy, "King," 257–263.

69 Ibid., 258.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

skills allowed him to bring many technological advancements into Saudi Arabia without forcing the Saudi people to give up their religious beliefs.

Ibn Saud made immense contributions to the development of Saudi Arabia. He initiated a period of modernization in the mid-1940s that revolutionized the Arabian Peninsula. Between the years 1944 and 1946, the country took possession of its first piano, deep-freeze refrigerator and airplane.⁷² In 1951, the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO), previously SOCAL, completed its construction of a royal railway that connected Riyadh and Jeddah to the Persian Gulf, which cost over \$70 million to build—a sum that was taken out of the king’s own oil payments.⁷³ It took the passing of a generation, however, to relieve the country of its superstitious apprehensions toward scientific advancement, but, even then, the change that Ibn Saud initiated came rapidly.⁷⁴ Ibn Saud was largely responsible not only for the initiation but also the development of the early U.S.-Saudi security relationship. His conviction that Saudi Arabia must modernize and become a player in the global economy provided the leadership that the United States needed in both an economic and security partner in the Middle East.

D. CONCLUSION

Oil drove the early interaction between the United States and Saudi Arabia, but, while Ibn Saud personally handled the Saudi aspect of this relationship, U.S. oil companies, rather than the U.S. government, led the American side. The major contributing factors to the SOCAL’s success in Saudi Arabia include the relative simplicity of the international oil market, British control over many of the known oil reserves in the Middle East and Ibn Saud’s leadership skills and business acumen. Furthermore, Ibn Saud’s ability to manage and cultivate this relationship—both in his dealings with SOCAL and through his handling of domestic religious opposition—demand credit for the partnership’s survival and success in its early years. During the 1920s and 1930s, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States remained

⁷² Ibid., 260.

⁷³ Michel G. Nehme, “Saudi Arabia 1950–80: Between Nationalism and Religion,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 4 (1994), 930.

⁷⁴ Eddy, “King,” 262.

largely business-like in nature and would continue to do so until the United States integrated Saudi Arabia into its national security strategy in World War II.

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III. WORLD WAR II: OIL, LOCATION AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Until World War II, most of the dialogue between Saudi Arabia and the United States occurred between Ibn Saud and the executives at SOCAL. This aspect of the relationship changed during World War II, when Washington began to regard the oil and geographic location of the Middle East with increasing value to national security. Additionally, unrealistic financial demands by Ibn Saud on SOCAL led the company to appeal to Washington for assistance, which gave the federal government an open door through which to assert its authority in the business partnership. As the war drew to an end, competition between the United States and Great Britain for influence over the Saudi kingdom increased, causing both countries to make aggressive diplomatic attempts to court a strong partnership with the king. Suspicious of British imperialism, Ibn Saud showed favoritism toward the United States.

World War II changed the fundamental nature of the U.S.-Saudi relationship because it added a security aspect to a once primarily economic based partnership. It also set many standards for the future of how Washington would interact with U.S. companies that operated overseas. This section will explore the major themes of the development of the U.S.-Saudi security relationship during World War II: Saudi Arabia's oil and location as a U.S. security concern, Ibn Saud's relationship with the British and U.S.-British competition.

A. NATIONAL SECURITY: THE LEND-LEASE ACT AND THE FOREIGN PETROLEUM POLICY

In addition to being a strong leader, Ibn Saud was also a shrewd businessman. He recognized the spike in value that CASOC's discovery had afforded Saudi Arabia, and, by 1940, he was fully exploiting it. In that year, the British, attempting to maintain Saudi support and stability in World War II, resumed subsidy payments of roughly £400,000 to the Saudi king. Ibn Saud claimed that he required more to keep his kingdom from collapsing though. In addition to British financial support and \$3 million already contracted by CASOC, Ibn Saud demanded an additional \$3 million from the American

company for 1941. Around this time, CASOC's annual royalties were roughly \$1.5 million—a sum that made it nearly impossible to meet Ibn Saud's growing demands.⁷⁵

With little other options, CASOC appealed to Washington for help. Representing CASOC on a trip to Washington, DC, in April 1941, James Andrew Moffett made a face-to-face appeal to President Roosevelt for financial assistance in meeting Ibn Saud's high demands.⁷⁶ Politically, Roosevelt's hands were tied since the United States had not yet entered the war and Saudi Arabia was a neutral country that still operated heavily under the influence of the British Empire—such an agreement would have drawn strong objections from Congress.⁷⁷ Moffett framed his request to Washington by arguing that Saudi Arabia, and particularly Ibn Saud, was the sole source of stability in the region.⁷⁸ Moffett also suggested that the British increase their financial support to Saudi Arabia as well, and, although his plan denied the British access to more Saudi oil, the British government favored the proposal. Great Britain's needs for oil were already satisfied through concessions elsewhere in the Middle East, but the British government saw Moffett's plan as a way to garner more political support and popularity from the resentful Saudi government through an Anglo-American-Saudi contract.⁷⁹ Although Roosevelt also showed receptiveness to aspects of Moffett's plan, fears of a political backlash from isolationists in Congress precluded the president from acting. CASOC continued to press for federal support during 1941 and 1942, but domestic politics prevented Roosevelt from committing government assistance to CASOC during the first few years of the war.⁸⁰

Despite its initial reluctance to work with CASOC, Washington began to view Saudi Arabia with increasing significance as the war developed.⁸¹ The kingdom's location along supply routes into Russia led State Department officials to hold Middle

⁷⁵ Stoff, *Oil*, 44–45.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 48–49.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 50.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 46–58.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 56.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Eastern stability and access to Saudi Arabia's airfields as critical elements of the war effort.⁸² As an act of good will toward Ibn Saud for his assistance, Roosevelt promised agricultural assistance to the king in January 1942, and, in May the United States opened a legation in Jeddah.⁸³ Roosevelt still remained hesitant over Moffett's plan, however.

CASOC's relentlessness finally paid off when the company gained the ear of Petroleum Coordinator and Secretary of the Interior Ickes, who wanted the United States to explore foreign oil options out of a concern for depletion of U.S. sources.⁸⁴ With Ickes' help, CASOC convinced the president of what it considered to be the importance of Saudi Arabian oil in U.S. interests, and, on February 16, 1943, Roosevelt integrated Saudi Arabia into the Lend-Lease Act, stating that "the defense of Saudi Arabia is vital to the defense of the United States."⁸⁵ The Lend-Lease Act was a program through which the United States provided nearly \$50 billion dollars of assistance to over 30 countries during World War II and was "designed to serve America's interest in defeating Nazi Germany."⁸⁶ In July of that year, the United States elevated its chargé d'affaires to Minister Resident at Jeddah.⁸⁷ Roosevelt's extension of the Lend-Lease Act to Saudi Arabia demonstrates that the president had by now come to see the kingdom as an integral part of U.S. national security during World War II.

In 1944, the Roosevelt administration introduced the Foreign Petroleum Policy of the United States, which called for the "substantial and orderly expansion of production in Eastern Hemisphere sources of supply, principally in the Middle East."⁸⁸ This policy resulted from the push from Ickes and others in Washington to practice oil conservation throughout the Western Hemisphere, and it played a major role in refocusing U.S. oil

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 57.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 59.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ "Milestones: 1937–1945," U.S. Department of State: Office of the Historian, accessed July 18, 2015, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/lend-lease>.

⁸⁷ Stoff, *Oil*, 59.

⁸⁸ Klare, *Blood*, 30.

interests within the Middle East.⁸⁹ Saudi Arabia's role in the United States' security strategy increased during World War II, partly because of its geographic location and partly because of its oil; Saudi Arabia's geographic location added value to its oil, in the eyes of Washington. Both the Lend-Lease Act and Roosevelt's Foreign Petroleum Policy reveal how Saudi Arabia's oil and location had become intricately connected in Roosevelt's security strategy during this time.

Many members of the Roosevelt administration wanted to push for even more federal involvement in the oil business to ensure the U.S. government's access to Saudi resources. To guarantee the federal government's access to Saudi Arabian oil, Secretary of State Cordell Hull recommended the creation of a government-run oil company called the Petroleum Reserves Corporation (PRC). Secretary of the Interior and Petroleum Coordinator Ickes tried to expand on the idea and even proposed that the PRC buy out CASOC's current reserves.⁹⁰ The plan ultimately failed, however, as a result of combined resistance from CASOC, the British government and U.S. Congress. Ickes' PRC proposal marked the height of American government control over U.S. oil commerce in the Middle East. Since the failure of Icke's proposal, Washington has shared a "public-private partnership"⁹¹ with the big American oil companies in which the central government has provided the "maintenance of security and stability in the major oil-producing regions."⁹²

Both the PRC and the Lend-Lease program served as significant milestones in the development of U.S. federal interaction with American commercial oil companies in Saudi Arabia. While the failure of the PRC helped define U.S. oil companies' relationship to the federal government, the Lend-Lease Program highlights a major milestone in the origins in the security relationship between the U.S. government and Saudi Arabia.⁹³

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁹¹ Ibid., 35.

⁹² Ibid., 33.

⁹³ Ibid., 61.

B. IBN SAUD AND THE BRITISH

As the U.S.-Saudi security relationship rapidly developed during World War II, Great Britain also sought to maintain its existing influence over Saudi Arabia. Besides security interests during World War II, Saudi Arabia's geographic location offered proximity to other Middle Eastern countries in which the British also had investments. Additionally, the Strait of Hormuz and Bab-el-Mandeb provided Saudi Arabia access to the Indian Ocean where Great Britain still held many international political and economic interests.⁹⁴ Ibn Saud remained suspicious of the British despite the amount of financial support he received from the European country. The Saudi king generally preferred to work with Americans, since he believed they were less prone to colonialism and that their interests were mostly business oriented.⁹⁵ While the relationship that Ibn Saud had with the United States was of a strictly business nature until World War II, he relied heavily on the British for political support and security assistance throughout the early twentieth century and continued to do so during the war.

In the years leading up to World War II, the British became progressively anxious about their ability to rely on Saudi Arabia for support should Great Britain decide to fight. The British relentlessly tried to calm Ibn Saud's suspicions of a colonialist plot through several actions, one of which included emphasizing a "pro-Arab and anti-Zionist" foreign policy.⁹⁶ In the spring of 1939, Great Britain issued a white paper that restricted Jewish immigration into, and Jewish land purchases in, Palestine, and it allowed Palestine to "become an independent state under the control of its Arab majority" after ten years.⁹⁷ Great Britain also offered Ibn Saud a "quasi-guarantee" that the British military would protect Saudi Arabia should the country come under attack "because the two governments would be fighting against a common enemy and because Britain had a vital interest in preserving unimpeded transit for ships moving through the Red Sea."⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Silverfarb, "Britain," 409.

⁹⁵ Bronson, *Thicker*, 33.

⁹⁶ Silverfarb, "Britain," 404.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Finally, the British government provided the Saudi king financial aid to rebuild the Hijaz railway and other projects and a “large credit” for weapons purchases.⁹⁹

Among the many political and financial attempts by the British to appease Ibn Saud, the Saudi king’s leading motivation for supporting the British and the Allies during World War II was security.¹⁰⁰ Ibn Saud maintained an official position of neutrality during World War II, but many of the king’s actions demonstrated his support for the Allies. For instance, Ibn Saud twice refused to admit the German Minister Fritz Grobba during the war, preventing the creation of a German legation in Saudi Arabia.¹⁰¹ Although the British may not have realized it, by the late 1930s Ibn Saud had begun to feel an equal, if not greater, pressure resulting from domestic issues and regional politics to keep the British close, while the British continued make efforts to appease the Saudi king, albeit unnecessarily. Ibn Saud’s authority within his new kingdom hinged largely on a thriving economy, which the Saudis had built primarily on oil exports and religious pilgrimages.¹⁰² By the late 1930s, Ibn Saud relied heavily on British sea power to keep trade lines secure and travel to Saudi Arabia safe and accessible, which were necessary to maintain a steady flow of oil exports, food imports, and religious tourist activity.¹⁰³ Moreover, Ibn Saud worried that a Saudi Arabian snub of British support could result in a hostile British reaction; the British had the capability to blockade Saudi ports, limiting Saudi Arabia’s access to food and trade, and the British possessed bases throughout the Middle East from which they could easily launch air strikes on Saudi cities.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, regional enemies—the French-backed Hashemites from Transjordan and Iraq, the Shi’ites in the Hasa region and recently conquered Arab tribes that Ibn Saud constantly worked to keep subdued—surrounded the king, and he depended on British political and military assistance to maintain his power.¹⁰⁵ Overall, Ibn Saud did not relish

⁹⁹ Ibid., 409.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 410.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

his relationship with Great Britain, but his political astuteness allowed him to recognize British support as an unavoidable necessity for the sustainment of his new kingdom.

C. THE UNITED STATES GAINS FAVOR

Near the end of the World War II, Washington grew concerned that Great Britain's influence over the Saudi king would jeopardize the economic and security advancements that the United States had made in the region up to that point. The Saudi Arabian economy continued to suffer at the end of the war, primarily because of the war's effect on Saudi trade and travel, and, in some areas of the Kingdom, the poor economic situation was so extreme that it resulted in starvation.¹⁰⁶ Many government officials feared that the collapse of the Saudi economy could destroy any future plans that the United States had for the U.S.-Saudi oil trade.

In January 1945, Wallace Murray, head of the Office of Near Eastern and African Affairs, wrote in a top-secret letter to Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson, "if the Saudi Arabian economy should break down and political disintegration ensue, there is a danger that either Great Britain or Soviet Russia would attempt to move into Saudi Arabia to preserve order and thus prevent the other from doing so."¹⁰⁷ Murray shared Ickes' concern that the United States would deplete North and South American oil reserves, and he emphasized the need to protect and continue to invest in the Saudi Arabian oil fields that were already part of the United States' concessions.¹⁰⁸ Between the years of 1940 and 1945, Great Britain provided the Saudi government almost \$40 million to maintain a strong diplomatic relationship between the two countries.¹⁰⁹ In 1945, Murray suggested that the U.S. government provide up to \$57 million over the next five years in addition to the \$13.4 million already promised by ARAMCO, which CASOC had renamed itself as in 1944, to compete with British influence over Saudi

¹⁰⁶ Baer, *Sleeping*, 78, 79.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 80.

Arabia.¹¹⁰ The U.S. Navy showed a particularly strong interest in Saudi oil near the end of World War II, and, not only did naval leadership back Murray's position, but key naval figures argued that the United States should continue to expand oil concessions in Saudi Arabia and other foreign places solely for U.S. security interests. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal wrote in 1944 that "the bargaining power of the United States in international conferences involving vital materials like oil ... will depend in some degree upon the retention ... of such oil reserves," and "the active expansion of such holdings is very much to be desired."¹¹¹ While the United States and Great Britain had generally shared a cooperative approach toward Saudi Arabia during World War II, toward the end of the war the two Western countries began to engage in diplomatic competition for Ibn Saud's favor.

Arguably, Washington was overly concerned about losing influence in Saudi Arabia due to Ibn Saud's apprehension toward working with the British. Nonetheless, the federal government pressed aggressively forward with a policy to court Ibn Saud's favor over the European power. On February 12, 1945, President Roosevelt met Ibn Saud in person for the first time onboard the USS *Quincy* in the Great Bitter Lake in the Suez Canal.¹¹² The meeting resulted in several agreements between the U.S. and Saudi governments, many of which were already works in progress, including American access to Saudi Arabian ports, consent for the United States to build military bases in Saudi Arabia and Saudi permission for ARAMCO to construct the Trans-Arabian pipeline that would stretch from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea.¹¹³ While the meeting was largely a success, the President was unable to persuade Ibn Saud to change his views on the creation of the state of Israel, and Ibn Saud remained steadfast in his conviction that "it was the Germans, not the Arabs, who should pay" for the Holocaust.¹¹⁴ A final clause of the agreement between the two leaders, and possibly the most significant to Ibn Saud,

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 82.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

consisted of President Roosevelt's promise that "America would not seek to occupy Saudi soil as the British had occupied so many of Saudi Arabia's neighboring countries."¹¹⁵ The meeting onboard the USS *Quincy* demonstrates how World War II had quickly transformed a business relationship between American oil companies and Ibn Saud into a security partnership between the governments of both states. The meeting between President Roosevelt and Ibn Saud was to have a profound impact on Saudi Arabia's immediate future, propelling it from a struggling Middle Eastern state whose livelihood depended largely on religious tourism to an oil-based economic powerhouse. By 1948, the production of Saudi oil had risen from 21.3 million barrels in 1945 to 142.9 million barrels; by 1952 Saudi Arabia would produce over 300 million barrels.¹¹⁶

Ibn Saud died in 1953. Under his leadership, Saudi Arabia had transformed from a land wrought with tribal violence and little money to a kingdom courted by the world's strongest powers for political, economic and security cooperation. While to Western eyes Ibn Saud's high demands on the United States and Great Britain may cause him to appear greedy, his business and political skills were arguably exactly what Saudi Arabia needed to bring it into the twentieth century. Yet Ibn Saud sought to draw the line at security cooperation during his reign by refusing to allow U.S. foreign policy to shape his domestic and regional policies, including his stance on Israel.

D. CONCLUSION

Prior to World War II, the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia was largely economic. During the early 1940s, the U.S. government began to view Saudi Arabia's geographic location and oil with significant value in the war effort, causing Washington to incorporate Saudi Arabia into its national security strategy. The introduction of the Foreign Petroleum Policy was a major contributor to this shift in Washington's interest in Saudi Arabia's oil and geographic location. The federal government's new approach toward Saudi Arabia came at the relief of CASOC executives, who were struggling to meet Ibn Saud's increasing financial demands.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Already receiving financial and military support from the British, Ibn Saud grew increasingly receptive toward working with the U.S. government because he believed that their intentions were absent of imperialistic motivations, unlike the British. By the end of the war, the fundamental nature of the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia had changed. The business relationship between U.S. oil companies and Ibn Saud had transformed into a diplomatic partnership with where the U.S. government replaced CASOC as the lead negotiator for the United States.

The new partnership that emerged at the conclusion of World War II suggests that Roosevelt took a largely *analytical* approach toward Saudi Arabia, since it was largely based on security needs. Access to Saudi oil allowed Washington to support the expanding oil-based infrastructure of its military without tapping into its own reserves. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's geographic proximity to the United States' new emerging adversary, the Soviet Union, offered the United States significant geostrategic advantages. This partnership also proved valuable to Saudi Arabia's security interests as well; the money that the United States promised Saudi Arabia helped Ibn Saud to quell tribal conflict and bring his country out of the economic depression that occurred in the 1930s. The culminating meeting between President Roosevelt and Ibn Saud onboard the USS *Quincy* highlights one point of contention that will continue to permeate the partnership through the next several decades, however. The United States saw a diplomatic partnership with Saudi Arabia as means to exert its own foreign policy objectives on regional Middle Eastern affairs, while the Saudi monarch strived to keep the relationship based solely on mutual economic and security interests. In the meeting onboard the USS *Quincy*, the topic was over Israel, although this one instance marks the beginning of a pattern of dialogue that will continue to plague the partnership over a range of topics. The security needs of the United States, which included oil and geostrategic interests, drove the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia during the war, which, again, reveals that Roosevelt took a mostly *analytical* approach to Saudi Arabia. As the threat of Soviet communism grows during the Cold War, however, a new factor soon begins to contribute to the ongoing development of the U.S.-Saudi security partnership: ideology.

IV. THE COLD WAR ERA: PROTECTING SECURITY INTERESTS WITHIN AN IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Security cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia began during World War II. Although interaction between the two countries started as a business partnership between civilian oil companies and the Saudi monarchy, during the war, the U.S. federal government began to incorporate Saudi Arabia into its national security strategy. Saudi Arabia's oil and geographic location increased in importance in U.S. foreign policy at the conclusion of the war when the once dominant western European states, namely France and Great Britain, began to lose influence in the region while Soviet Russia began to expand. Since a large portion of Middle Eastern concessions held by U.S. civilian oil companies were in Saudi Arabia at the end of World War II, the U.S. government continued to leverage this economic relationship to support U.S. security interests in the Eastern Hemisphere against the communist threat.

During the Cold War, *ideological* issues such as communism and Arab nationalism played a role in U.S.-Saudi security relations. While these *ideological* issues affected U.S.-Saudi relations, to say that U.S. leaders during the early Cold War took an entirely *analytical* or *ideological* approach toward Saudi Arabia would oversimplify U.S. foreign policy during this period. Interaction between the House of Saud and Presidents Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy reveals that these presidents integrated both approaches into their foreign policy. In addition to communism and Arab nationalism, major issues that affected U.S.-Saudi security relations during the early Cold War included the following: shared fears of Soviet military aggression, the creation of an Israeli state in the Middle East, growing financial demands from the House of Saud, Ibn Saud's death, Middle Eastern regional politics and domestic politics in both countries. This section will explore how these themes affected the U.S.-Saudi security relationship during the Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations.

A. PRESIDENT TRUMAN

President Truman picked up where Roosevelt left off in his efforts to incorporate Saudi Arabia into the United States' security strategy. With the emergence of Soviet Russia as the new great threat to U.S. security, Truman's attempts to establish a greater U.S. military presence in the kingdom reveal that he saw geostrategic value in the kingdom, while access to Saudi oil also remained a priority. Both states opposed communism, which helped Truman's efforts in Saudi Arabia; however, other issues, such as new Saudi concerns of American imperialism, Israel and increasing financial demands from Ibn Saud posed challenges for Truman. This section will cover three major issues that dominated the United States' and Saudi Arabia's diplomatic dialogue during Truman's presidency: Soviet expansion and communism, Israel and Ibn Saud's increasing financial demands.¹¹⁷

1. The Soviet Threat

In 1946, a year after President Harry S. Truman entered office, 77 percent of Europe's oil supply came from Western Hemisphere.¹¹⁸ While Truman sought to shift this balance to the Eastern Hemisphere because he was concerned about the depletion of western oil, he also prioritized U.S.-Saudi Arabian relations out of a fear of Soviet expansion in the toward the west. Decreasing British influence in the Middle East and a largely isolationist Congress at the conclusion of World War II left President Truman facing an uphill battle.¹¹⁹ Additionally, during this time, the aggressiveness with which the Truman administration pursued a military presence in Saudi Arabia roused suspicions of U.S. imperialistic motives among the Saudi government. Without a doubt, Truman's primary foreign policy concern was Soviet expansion, and Roosevelt had already opened the door for positive U.S.-Saudi relations; Truman hoped to build upon his predecessor's work and incorporate Saudi Arabia into his security strategy against the Soviet Union.

¹¹⁷ Bronson, *Thicker*, 43, 45.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 45.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 44.

a. Religion and Ideology

An often-overlooked aspect of the immediate post-World War II relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States was the role of religion and ideology. While the First Amendment of the Constitution, which provides freedom of religion and expression within U.S. borders, contradicts the theocratic nature of the Saudi government, the House of Saud viewed the United States' championing of religious freedom as more compatible with Sharia law than Soviet communism, which rejected religion entirely. Rachel Bronson argues that, prior to the collapse of the USSR, the United States demonstrated little concern over "Saudi Arabia's extensive proselytizing of a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam ... because it had an anti-Communist justification."¹²⁰ Likewise, the threat that communism held to the House of Saud and its Islamic kingdom caused the Saudi government to look past some of the glaring differences between core American ideology regarding religious freedom and Saudi Arabia's own strict implementation of Sharia law. In this regard, the House of Saud viewed the United States not as an ideal partner but as a lesser evil when considering the role of religion in its foreign policy.¹²¹ The shared fears of communism among U.S. and Saudi leadership allowed Saudi Arabia to see more similarities in U.S. and Saudi ideology than what truly existed. Regardless, these mutual concerns allowed President Truman to continue assistance to Saudi Arabia after he announced the Truman Doctrine, which called for the United States to "provide political, military and economic assistance to all democratic nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces."¹²² Despite his commitment to preserve democracy, the Truman administration continued to increase aid to the theocratic kingdom, partly because of the polarizing effect that communism had on the international community.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 23.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² "The Truman Doctrine, 1947," U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, accessed July 19, 2015, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine>.

b. Geostrategic Interests

In addition to ideology, the Saudi government increased its security cooperation with the Truman administration because both governments viewed the Soviet Union as a formidable security threat. One of these advancements—Dhahran Airfield—provided the United States with a new geostrategic advantage, although without the Truman administration’s persistence, particularly from the State Department, this airfield probably would not have been built. In addition to the completion of the U.S. airfield in Dhahran in 1946, which was “particularly important as a staging point in the event there was trouble with the Russians,” Truman established the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (MDAA) of 1951 with Saudi Arabia. The MDAA was a five-year agreement that provided U.S. military training support to Saudi Arabia and resulted in the creation of the United States Military and Training Mission (USMTM) of 1953, which remains a major pillar for U.S.-Saudi military relations today. President Truman’s successes came with a price for U.S.-Saudi relations, however. For instance, the mere idea of a U.S. occupied airfield at Dhahran re-enforced growing Saudi suspicions of U.S. imperialistic motives in the 1940s. The Saudi government saw little reason for a continued U.S. military presence now that World War II had ended, and the proposal gave Ibn Saud concern about the future nature of U.S.-Saudi relations.¹²³ While Ibn Saud still preferred a partnership with the United States against the Soviet threat, the increased U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia concerned the king.

The airfield also caused controversy within the U.S. federal government. Initially proposed by the War Department, Dhahran Airfield became a topic of contention within the Truman administration shortly following the end of World War II. While an airbase on the Saudi Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf gave the United States a solid strategic foothold in the region, many U.S. officials, including leadership within the War Department, agreed with the Saudi government that an airfield in Dhahran was no longer necessary. Originally, Ibn Saud had rejected the proposal, but the State Department, believing the presence of a U.S. airbase in Saudi Arabia to be a positive step in U.S.-

¹²³ Bronson, *Thicker*, 48.

Saudi Arabian relations, continued to push for its construction. Ibn Saud accepted the airfield's creation only after the United States promised a large sum of monetary aid aimed specifically at improving Saudi Arabia's struggling economy. At the time, the idea of having U.S. military aircraft operate in Saudi Arabia was so controversial that the two countries agreed to call the project an airfield, rather than airbase, to prevent any undesired misperception of American imperialism. During the Cold War, Truman made significant geostrategic advancements in the Eastern Hemisphere through Saudi Arabia's cooperation, but these gains had a negative effect on the relationship between the two countries because they caused the Saudi government to question the United States' motives in Saudi Arabia.¹²⁴

2. Israel

While many of Truman's speeches reveal that he believed in the morality of a pro-Israeli U.S. foreign policy, the President backed Israel's creation for more than this reason; he also saw geostrategic value in the Jewish state.¹²⁵ In previous years, President Roosevelt had retained a largely vague position on the creation a Jewish state in Palestine, but he did send a very clear message to Ibn Saud that the United States would include the Arab world when making any major decisions about Israel. In a letter from Roosevelt to the Saudi king, the president stated, "there should be no decision altering the basic situation in Palestine without 'full consultation' with the Arab states."¹²⁶ In 1945, President Truman assured Ibn Saud that he would adhere to Roosevelt's promise, and, while Truman expressed his desire to allow Jewish immigrants into Palestine, he also released an official statement saying that a Jewish presence in Palestine "would have to be worked out with the British and the Arabs for a Jewish State."¹²⁷ While Truman was more open regarding his position on the creation of Israel than Roosevelt, he was similar

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Michael Ottolenghi, "Harry Truman's Recognition of Israel," *Historical Journal* 47, no. 4 (December 2004): 967, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4091664>.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 967.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 969.

to his predecessor in that he had given the Saudi government the impression that the United States would include Saudi Arabia on any major decisions regarding the issue.

On October 4, 1946, however, Truman issued statement that argued for a “viable Jewish State ... in an adequate area of Palestine instead of in the whole of Palestine” to which Ibn Saud quickly responded with a letter to the White House that expressed his severe disappointment in the President since Truman had apparently sent no prior notice to the Saudi king about the issuance of this statement.¹²⁸ Truman was not overly concerned about the King’s reaction, and he believed the Saudi state was already too economically dependent on the United States to turn against Washington based on the Israeli controversy alone.¹²⁹ Additionally, Ibn Saud’s fear of Soviet expansion continued to drive the king further into the U.S. security embrace regardless of Truman’s position on Israel; Ibn Saud even tried to use the issue as a bargaining tool for more security deals. In 1948, the king requested “a stronger U.S. guarantee against Soviet hostility to Saudi Arabia because of Saudi support of American policies in the Middle East.”¹³⁰ Ibn Saud’s expressed offense over Truman’s actions on October 4 was possibly over-exaggerated. Arguably, the Saudi king cared more about being a leading voice in the Arab community than the carving out of a small state that did not share a border with his own kingdom, meaning that his protests against the creation of Israel were mostly meant to impress the Arab world. Whether or not Ibn Saud cared as much about preventing the creation of Israel as he said he did, one thing is for certain: the king’s response to Truman’s statement—using the United States’ backing of Israel to appeal for increased military support—suggests that Ibn Saud valued the United States’ protection from the Soviet Union more than he cared about the United States’ backing of a Jewish state in the Middle East.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid., 972.

130 Ibid.

3. Financing a Kingdom

Despite Saudi Arabia's growing economy, Ibn Saud claimed that he was still struggling to meet all of the financial requirements necessary to maintain power over his large kingdom, which included paying off tribal leaders for their continued loyalty to the House of Saud.¹³¹ The king's assertion remained a topic of debate among Congress; many members believed that the Saudi king squandered his money and was becoming greedy.¹³² Regardless, in 1950, the Korean War intensified Truman's concerns over Soviet expansion, pushing Saudi Arabia's position as a western buffer state to the forefront of Truman's foreign policy.¹³³ The president was willing to take a significant hit in the eyes of Congress and many other members of the federal government to maintain the support and favor of Ibn Saud.¹³⁴ In the previous year, ARAMCO had paid the U.S. government more money in taxes than it gave to the Saudi government; the U.S. government collected \$43 million in tax money from ARAMCO, while Ibn Saud received only \$39.1 million.¹³⁵ This disparity frustrated the Saudis, who felt that the U.S. government was cheating the House of Saud out of their financial dues. The State Department sided with the Saudi government, and they pushed for an adjustment in revenue distribution that that they argued was necessary to maintain good U.S.-Saudi relations.¹³⁶

In 1950, the Truman administration enacted the 50/50 Agreement, which dictated that half of ARAMCO's revenues go to the Saudi Arabian government and the other half go directly to ARAMCO. Backed mostly by the State Department, and largely opposed by Congress, the administration hoped that the 50/50 Agreement would smooth over some of the major points of tension between the two states, particularly in Palestine.¹³⁷

¹³¹ Bronson, *Thicker*, 55.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid., 56.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 55–56.

Additionally, in 1950 ARAMCO also began to use the American tax code help lighten the financial burden that Ibn Saud's increasing demands were placing on the company. The American tax code allowed U.S. companies operating in a foreign country to deduct the amount of taxes that the foreign country charged from the taxes that the company paid to the U.S. government. The U.S. government had enacted the American tax code in 1918 as part of the Internal Revenue Code to encourage U.S. companies to expand into foreign enterprises without fear of being double taxed, but the code was originally intended for use in more developed countries that actually taxed its companies—Ibn Saud demanded royalties from ARAMCO, not taxes. Yet, with the help of the State Department, which was eager to keep the Saudi king happy, ARAMCO managed to convince Ibn Saud to change the verbiage of his demands from royalties to taxes.¹³⁸

The State Department's manipulation of the tax code and the enactment of the 50/50 Agreement infuriated Congress since these things allowed the Saudi government to receive money that Congress believed rightfully belonged to the U.S. government. Moreover, these policies forced American taxpayers to pay the difference. Despite Congress's frustrations, the State Department managed to keep Ibn Saud content by continuing to fill the Saudi purse at the U.S. government's and taxpayers' expense—in 1951, the federal government received only \$6 million from ARAMCO in taxes, while ARAMCO paid the Saudi government \$110 million.¹³⁹ The Truman administration, against the wishes of Congress, demonstrated how important it viewed Saudi Arabia's role in U.S. security through its compliance of the Saudi king's increasingly high financial demands.

B. PRESIDENT EISENHOWER: A NEW DOCTRINE AND A NEW KING

While Graebner argues that Wilson's presidency marked the beginning of a shift from an *analytical* to an *ideological* approach in overall U.S. foreign policy, it was during Truman's presidency that ideology began to play a substantial role in U.S.-Saudi relations

¹³⁸ Donald Lee Barlett and James B. Steele, *America: Who Really Pays the Taxes?* (New York: Touchstone, 1994), 184–186.

¹³⁹ Bronson, *Thicker*, 56.

specifically. Additionally, the incorporation of Middle Eastern states that shared the United States' opposition of communism into its security strategy during this period does not mean that the United States completely shed its *analytical* approach, but it does imply that Washington included new calculations into its foreign strategy. Saudi Arabia was not a democracy, although this did not preclude the United States from continuing to cooperate with the kingdom. With the rise of Soviet Russia as the leading security threat to the United States following World War II, Saudi Arabia's oil and geographic location continued to fit into Washington's *analytical* security strategy. However, implementation of the Eisenhower Doctrine lessened the distinction between the *ideological* and *analytical* approaches used by the United States in its foreign policy with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's oil and geographic location continued to remain important to the United States in its security strategy against the Soviet Union, but the United States' attempts to exert its anticommunist agenda into regional politics blurred the lines of where the security interests of the United States ended and its ideological interests began.

In addition to the Eisenhower Doctrine, a change in Saudi leadership contributed greatly to the ongoing development of U.S.-Saudi security relations during the Eisenhower years. The death of Ibn Saud marked the end of a period of over two decades continuity in Saudi leadership. The late king's son and successor, Saud bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, or King Saud, was often regarded by both the Saudi court and the U.S. government as unpredictable in his approach toward Middle Eastern states as well as Great Britain and the United States. The king's erratic political behavior frustrated U.S. officials who hoped to find a dependable and loyal Middle Eastern partner against the spread of communism in the Middle East. Both the Eisenhower Doctrine and the succession of King Saud contributed greatly to the course of U.S.-Saudi security relations during the Eisenhower years, and this section will examine and analyze how those factors affected the relationship.

1. The Eisenhower Doctrine

In 1953, Ibn Saud died, and Dwight D. Eisenhower entered office as the 34th President of the United States. Under the Eisenhower administration, the United States

adopted one of its most pivotal foreign policies of the twentieth century: the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957. While the Truman Doctrine encompassed many of the same principles as the Eisenhower Doctrine—namely the preservation of democracy—the United States applied the Eisenhower Doctrine much more aggressively in its relationship with Saudi Arabia by vowing to “use military force to stop the spread of communism in the Middle East.”¹⁴⁰ The doctrine resulted not only from fears of Soviet expansion but also from a desire to “counter Egypt’s growing influence,”¹⁴¹ and implementation of the doctrine in the region extended beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia, guiding U.S. action in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.¹⁴² The Middle East was, in other words, central to the Eisenhower Doctrine. Washington’s commitment to prevent the spread of communism in the region caused the U.S. government to indirectly take on the burdens of Middle Eastern stability, which the United States would carry into the late twentieth century and beyond.

The emphasis that the Eisenhower Doctrine placed on Middle Eastern politics drove Washington to carry forward the *ideological* approach that Truman had introduced through the Truman Doctrine, which indirectly affected the United States’ relationship with Saudi Arabia. Most Middle Eastern states reacted negatively to the Eisenhower Doctrine.¹⁴³ Since accepting the doctrine meant challenging the authority of Nasser, who was highly popular throughout the Middle East at the time, it requested leaders in the region take a huge political risk.¹⁴⁴ Under the leadership of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Washington looked to Saudi Arabia for support in implementing the Eisenhower Doctrine in the Middle East. Dulles believed Saudi Arabia’s new king, King Saud, was “the only figure in the area with sufficient presence and potential assets to serve as a counterpoise to Nasser.”¹⁴⁵ The king accepted this new ideological doctrine proposed by the United States, which strengthened U.S.-Saudi security relations, but this action by no

¹⁴⁰ Peter L. Hahn, “Securing the Middle East: The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (March, 2006), 38, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27552745>.

¹⁴¹ Bronson, *Thicker*, 73.

¹⁴² Hahn, “Securing,” 38.

¹⁴³ Bronson, *Thicker*, 73.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

means implied that relations between Washington and the new king would be easy from this point on.

Saudi Arabian domestic politics during the reign of King Saud and internal politics within the House of Saud prevented the Eisenhower Doctrine from being effectively implemented through Saudi Arabia in the Middle East. A failed attempt to assassinate United Arab Republic (UAR) President Nasser, irresponsible spending of the royal purse and other erratic behavior caused many within the Saudi court to doubt King Saud's leadership abilities.¹⁴⁶ Popularity for King Saud's younger brother, Crown Prince Faisal gained momentum after the failed assassination attempt of Nasser, and, in 1958, with the help of the Saudi court, Faisal wrested many of the king's responsibilities away from King Saud and held them until 1960.¹⁴⁷ Observing the internal strife within the Saudi court caused the Eisenhower administration to second guess its decision to look to King Saud as a source of influence with the Arab world.

In 1958, three things occurred that helped influence Eisenhower to change his approach toward the Middle East: the Lebanon crisis, the Iraqi revolution and the founding of the U.A.R.¹⁴⁸ These three events drove Eisenhower to acknowledge the greater role that Arab nationalism had come to play in Middle Eastern politics by the late 1950s. Furthermore, these events, compounded with the political divide that plagued the House of Saud at the time, caused President Eisenhower to take his eyes off King Saud and look for another leader who Washington could use as the fulcrum through which to influence Middle Eastern politics: U.A.R. President Nasser.¹⁴⁹ Fawaz A. Gerges writes that this sudden shift within the Eisenhower administration demonstrated that "the United States was not only to come to terms with [Nasser's] brand of Arab nationalism, but also to use it as a political weapon against Soviet communism."¹⁵⁰ Following this shift in foreign policy, preexisting tensions between Washington and the U.A.R. began to thaw,

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 75.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 76.

¹⁴⁸ Gerges, "Kennedy," 295.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 297.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 296.

which Gerges argues occurred for three reasons: “first, preventing the further expansion of Soviet influence; second, protecting the huge oil reserves in the Arabian Peninsula and security the flow of cheap oil to the West; and third, keeping the Arab-Israeli conflict in the ‘icebox.’”¹⁵¹ Gerges’ three reasons for why Eisenhower began to accept Arab nationalism and seek cooperation with Nasser suggests that Eisenhower’s *ideological* approach to foreign policy as implemented through the Eisenhower Doctrine still possessed a largely *analytical* aspect. While Gerges’ first point relates to the spread of communism, the scholar argues that Eisenhower was concerned about more than just preventing the spread of communism in the Middle East. President Eisenhower had very real security goals in the region, including the preservation of U.S. access to Middle Eastern oil fields, which depended upon regional stability.

2. A New King

King Saud adopted the traditional economic policies of that region, which allowed the royal family to claim ownership over all state revenues.¹⁵² King Saud’s dated economic policies resulted in a significant disparity between the wealth of the royal family and the financial status of rural farmers, and by the mid-1950s Saudi Arabia had developed into a mostly “two-class society.”¹⁵³ Although Ibn Saud had helped modernize Saudi Arabia by bringing new technology and foreign trade to the country, many of these advancements—including projects to build schools, railroads and hospitals that ARAMCO was constructing at his bidding—stalled upon King Saud’s succession. Other than the railway that ARAMCO had built, which had helped transform Riyadh into a modern city, Ibn Saud developed little new infrastructure in Saudi Arabia. Under King Saud, the kingdom continued to increase its oil production, exports and returns, but it was mostly the royal family who benefited from these profits while the rest of the country remained largely impoverished, minus a small middle class population in the urban areas.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 297.

¹⁵² Nehme, “Saudi,” 931.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

King Saud spent much of his reign engaged in political competition with his brother, Crown Prince Faisal, and many, including both the U.S. government and the Saudi court regarded the new king as an incompetent and immature ruler. Much of the Saudi court criticized the king for his lavish spending of government funds as well as his blatant cruelty toward his subjects. For instance, when riding in his car, he was known to throw money out of his window “to watch locals chase after it.”¹⁵⁵ In 1958, after a Syrian intelligence chief accused King Saud of hiring him to assassinate the newly formed United Arab Republic (UAR) President Nasser, Crown Prince Faisal, backed by the Saudi court, confronted the Saudi king and forced him to transfer his power to the crown prince.¹⁵⁶ After this event, Faisal managed most of the king’s political responsibilities while King Saud simply retained his status as figurehead until 1960, when Faisal turned his power back over to King Saud following a budget dispute.¹⁵⁷ Washington considered Faisal to be a responsible and intelligent leader who tended to place the interests of the Saudi people in high regard; in short, he was everything that his brother was not. In addition to Faisal’s character and sense of responsibility, Washington’s belief that Faisal was “anti-communist” solidified Faisal’s position as the U.S. government’s first choice for Saudi king.¹⁵⁸ In the years surrounding the Eisenhower administration, King Saud’s overall approach to foreign policy was as unpredictable as his domestic behavior was puerile. The following section will explore King Saud’s foreign policy in the Middle East and with both the British and the United States.

a. King Saud and the Middle East

King Saud’s approach to regional politics contrasted sharply with that of his father. While Ibn Saud interacted regularly with the British and U.S. governments both on an economic and political level, he tended to avoid involvement in regional affairs.¹⁵⁹ King Saud took a much more active role in Middle Eastern politics, however, and many

¹⁵⁵ Bronson, *Thicker*, 75.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Nehme, “Saudi,” 931.

of his decisions during the 1950s were largely influenced by the Arab nationalist movement that swept the region in the mid-twentieth century.¹⁶⁰ Many of the new king's regional political actions during the 1950s reflected the anti-Western attitudes of the Arab nationalists, although a large portion of King Saud's hostility seemed to be aimed at the European powers particularly, rather than at the United States. For instance, the Saudi king stood with Egypt and Syria in opposition to the Baghdad Pact, halted oil shipments to France and Great Britain and backed Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's actions during the Suez Crisis.¹⁶¹ Desiring to gain popular support within the Arab world, King Saud complied with the Arab nationalists in his regional politics, which involved taking active measures against the British, who had financed his father's kingdom for decades.

King Saud's approach toward regional politics was also disjointed, however. Even though King Saud cooperated with Egypt and Syria to oppose the Baghdad Pact, he also viewed them as threats to his power; Syria was growing closer to the Soviet Union, and he was engaged in competition with Nasser over the title of leader of the Arab world.¹⁶² In many ways, King Saud retained the mentality of a tribal leader while failing to understand the greater geopolitical context of the Cold War during which he reigned. Instead of engaging in regional political competition and schemes, such as assassination attempts, to become the next Arab chieftain, King Saud could have invested more time and effort into building a stronger relationship with the West to ensure Saudi Arabia's protection from the growing Soviet threat.

b. King Saud and the British

Ibn Saud's distrust of the British left a strong impression on his son, and King Saud interpreted the Baghdad Pact as nothing more than another attempt by the old imperial power to reinvigorate its colonialist policies within the Middle East. Signed by Turkey, Iraq and the British in 1955, the three countries intended the pact to result in "a joint defense against external aggression" in the Middle East and to "establish [British]

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 931, 932.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 931.

¹⁶² Ibid.

cooperation ... not just consultation.”¹⁶³ Whether some members of the British government truly had any imperialist intentions in mind, most British supporters of the pact wished that it would at least result in stronger British and NATO influences in the Middle East. In a speech to the House of Commons on March 2, 1955, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden stated that he hoped the agreement would “forge a new association with Iraq, which will bring our relations into line with those which already exist with Turkey and our other partners in NATO.”¹⁶⁴

Like his father, King Saud tended to trust the Americans more than the British. In the context of a period of intense Arab nationalist movements, much of the Arab world viewed the Baghdad Pact between Great Britain and the two Middle Eastern nations as nothing more than European colonialism cloaked in military diplomacy.¹⁶⁵ Many scholars argue that the Baghdad Pact was nothing more than part of Great Britain’s Soviet containment strategy. British historian Richard L. Jasse points out that the Baghdad Pact fit into British “determination to maintain strategic paramountcy in an area considered vital for the defense of the empire” and that the “‘Northern Tier’ of states . . . was certainly interwoven throughout the discussions of the time.”¹⁶⁶ Regardless, King Saud continued to view Great Britain with suspicion, making the United States his most viable option when considering support from a great power.

c. King Saud and the United States

Regardless of the British government’s true intentions in the Baghdad Pact, a similar argument could be made about U.S. interests in the Middle East in the Eisenhower Doctrine—that the doctrine represented an attempt by the United States to exert its political authority beyond its own borders. Many historians agree that the primary purpose of the Eisenhower Doctrine was to “use economic aid, military aid, and armed forces to stop the spread of communism in the [Middle East],” which resulted

163 Richard L. Jasse, “The Baghdad Pact: Cold War or Colonialism?” *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 1 (January, 1991), 140.

164 Ibid., 141.

165 Nehme, “Saudi,” 931.

166 Jasse, “Baghdad,” 141.

from the United States' "alarm [of] Soviet capabilities to expand into the Third World."¹⁶⁷ Since much of the Eisenhower Doctrine focused on regions in the Eastern Hemisphere, many have argued that, as the Cold War progressed, the United States' adoption of the Eisenhower Doctrine to combat communism was really a disguised attempt of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East, East Asia and other regions of the world.

Some Middle Eastern countries such as Syria viewed America's policy of Soviet containment the same way King Saud had viewed the Baghdad Pact—as nothing more than continued attempts by the British to exert their control over the Middle East.¹⁶⁸ In 1955, the Ba'ath Party blamed the assassination of a highly popular and pro-Ba'athist colonel by a Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) member on Western infiltration of the Middle East and subsequently conducted a "witch hunt" of all SSNP members and pro-Westerners within the country.¹⁶⁹ The assassination, in addition to the Suez Crisis and Syria's discovery of a 1956 British-Iraqi scheme to overthrow the Syrian government, resulted in an overwhelmingly anti-Western attitude among the Syrians by the time the United States pronounced the Eisenhower Doctrine in 1957.¹⁷⁰ In August 1957, the U.S. government denounced the Syrian ambassador in Washington and his assistant following the expulsion of three U.S. diplomats from Syria after the Syrian government claimed to have discovered an American plot to overthrow it.¹⁷¹ Syria is only one of example of the growing hostility toward Western involvement in the Middle East, and King Saud shared some of the same sentiments as many of his Arab brethren.

King Saud's acceptance of the Eisenhower Doctrine, but his rejection of the Baghdad Pact, demonstrated the King's willingness to trust American intentions in his foreign policy, and it highlighted the continued strengthening of U.S.-Saudi Arabian relations in the 1950s. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's response to the Eisenhower Doctrine, compared to other Middle Eastern countries, emphasized the strong level of trust between

¹⁶⁷ Hahn, "Securing," 38.

¹⁶⁸ David W. Lesch, "When the Relationship Went Sour: Syria and the Eisenhower Administration," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (Winter, 1998), 95, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27551833>.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Lesch, "When," 101.

Riyadh and Washington. King Saud remained much more receptive toward U.S. interaction in the Middle East during the 1950s while other countries in the region such as Egypt grew increasingly apprehensive of the United States' intentions.¹⁷²

While King Saud's acceptance of the Eisenhower Doctrine allowed the United States to continue to project its power from the Middle East toward Soviet Russia, Eisenhower experienced a great deal more frustration in his diplomatic efforts with Saudi Arabia than his predecessors. Lacking the same political aptitude as his father, King Saud possessed an overly simplistic view of the U.S.-Saudi political relationship, viewing the United States mostly as a weapons supplier, financier and a primary oil customer.¹⁷³ Additionally, the rise in Arab nationalism, the decline of British and French influence in the Middle East and Congress's resentment of King Saud's economic policies forced the American president to work tirelessly at maintaining a strong rapport with the Saudi King.¹⁷⁴ The power struggle between King Saud and his brother Prince Faisal often prevented Washington from making political, military and economic advancements with the Saudis at the same rapid pace that Presidents Roosevelt and Truman maintained. King Saud's compliance with the Eisenhower Doctrine remains a significant cornerstone in the development of U.S.-Saudi relations today. Notwithstanding this success, King Saud's other aforementioned leadership failures created an unreliable partner for the United States and contributed to rising tensions in the region, causing Eisenhower to turn over to President John F. Kennedy "a Middle East mess."¹⁷⁵

C. PRESIDENT KENNEDY: A NEW APPROACH WITH OLD RESULTS

President John F. Kennedy sought to rebalance Washington's approach toward the Middle East to show less favoritism to the Saudi kingdom. Both his desire to emphasize Third World development and a lack of faith in King Saud's ability effectively lead the Arab world drove Kennedy's new diplomatic approach. The Kennedy

¹⁷² Hahn, "Securing," 41.

¹⁷³ Helmut Mejcher, "King Faisal Ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud in the Arena of World Politics: A Glimpse from Washington, 1950 to 1971," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 1 (May, 2004), 10.

¹⁷⁴ Bronson, *Thicker*, 73

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

administration embraced and carried forward Eisenhower's approach toward Arab nationalism and Nasser. Kennedy believed that the key to affecting Middle Eastern regional politics was by developing a relationship with Egyptian President Nasser, who Washington believed could influence the Arab nationalists to resist communism. Additionally, historical evidence suggests that Kennedy disliked the Saudi king personally and believed him ill-fit to lead the Arab world, and this personality conflict also contributed to the damaging of the relationship. By loosening some of the diplomatic bonds that Kennedy's predecessors had developed with the House of Saud and by obtaining Nasser's favor, the Kennedy administration believed that it could bring stability to the Middle East. Like Eisenhower, Kennedy's foreign policy was largely *ideological* because it sought to prevent the spread of communism in the Middle East by both developing Third World countries and utilizing the influence that Nasser held on Arab nationalists. Yet, also like Eisenhower, Kennedy's approach still had *analytical* elements because it sought to protect U.S. oil and geostrategic interests in the Middle East.

King Saud also tried to distance Saudi Arabia from the United States to appease growing dissent among Arab nationalists who criticized the House of Saud for being too submissive to the demands of the West. Although King Saud seemed to recognize the immense contribution that the United States brought to both the security of the crown and his kingdom, he eventually gave in to many of the demands of the Arab nationalists due to overwhelming domestic political pressure. Much of the Arab nationalists' criticism centered on the U.S. military presence at Dhahran airfield, which would remain a point of contention throughout the Kennedy years. When the Yemeni Civil War broke out in 1962, it quickly developed into an Arab proxy war between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. When King Saud requested assistance from the United States, President Kennedy responded by sending support to Dhahran Airfield, which the United States had handed over to the Saudi government one year prior. The following sections will examine in detail the major issues that affected the security relationship during the Kennedy years: tension driven by domestic politics, regional politics and personality conflicts; U.S. military presence at Dhahran Airfield; and Operation *Hardsurface*, which was Kennedy's response to the Yemeni Civil War.

1. Tension and Friction

King Saud's unpredictable foreign policy caused Washington to doubt his effectiveness in regional politics, but the king demonstrated true leadership skills within the Arab League during the Kuwaiti crisis of 1961, when Iraq sought to annex the new Kuwaiti state. King Saud staunchly opposed the aggressive claims on Kuwait by the Iraqi leader, Abd al-Karim Qassem, from the beginning of the conflict. The Saudi king told the Kuwaiti government that "as far as we are concerned, we are with you in the fight and struggle."¹⁷⁶ King Saud believed Kuwait's national security to be directly linked to Saudi Arabia's, emphasizing this position in a radio broadcast: "any mishap that befalls Kuwait affects Saudi Arabia and vice versa."¹⁷⁷ King Saud often led the debates among the Arab leaders in the Arab League Council, attempting to bring others to his side in support of Kuwait against potential Iraqi aggression.¹⁷⁸ Finally, the Saudi government backed its words with action, providing 1,200 troops to replace British forces—a number matched only by the UAR—after Great Britain withdrew as a result of the British military drawdown in the Middle East.¹⁷⁹

King Saud's support for Kuwait roused suspicion in the White House, causing President Kennedy to question the king's true motives. In a meeting with several of his ambassadors, the president asked Parker T. Hart, ambassador designate to Saudi Arabia, if the rumor about the Saudi troop movement was true and whether or not the ambassador thought that Saudi Arabia's intentions were merely to defend Kuwait or to beat Iraq to an invasion. Hart responded that the answer to the President's first question was true, and the ambassador also stated that he believed Saudi Arabia's motives in the Kuwaiti crisis were strictly to defend the sovereignty of Kuwait and not to supplant any other authority that might pose a threat to Kuwait or its government. With respect to other potential Arab leadership, Hart mentioned that the U.A.R. had "come out flatfooted," while the

176 Mike D. Goodwin, "The Iraq-Kuwait Crisis of 1961: A Lesson in Interregional Politics and Economics," (master's thesis, University of Washington, 1991), 28, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a238674.pdf>.

177 Ibid.

178 Ibid.

179 Ibid.

ambassador remained uncertain of the positions of the U.S.S.R. and Iran.¹⁸⁰ Ambassador Hart went on to proclaim that, with the gradual disentanglement of the British from the region, the United States should be prepared to see the emergence of a new power in the region, although he did not specify which one.¹⁸¹

Throughout this exchange, Hart seemed eager to convince the president that King Saud has been exhibiting exceptional leadership skills in the crisis. The Saudi government's leadership throughout the Kuwaiti crisis did little to impress much of Washington, however, and the Kennedy administration continued to invest a great deal of effort in engaging other Middle Eastern officials whom it believed to possess more leadership potential than King Saud. One of these leaders was Nasser; a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) published on June 27, 1961 stated that "militant nationalism will continue to be the most dynamic force in Arab political affairs, and Nasser is very likely to remain its foremost leader and symbol for the foreseeable future."¹⁸² Additionally, the U.S. government placed a heavy focus on the political stability of Iran during this time. In a memorandum to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara dated June 28, 1961, the JCS stated how the "strategic importance of Iran" could not be overemphasized, but they added that the United States lacked sufficient military resources to defend Iran from the potential Soviet threat.¹⁸³ Moreover, tension between the new Iranian Prime Minister Dr. Ali Amini and the Shah of Iran, the Palestinian refugee crisis, and Israel's rapid movement toward the possession of a nuclear weapon

180 Parker T. Hart, "Memorandum of Conversation," June 29, 1961, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963, vol. 17, Near East, 1961–1962, Document 71*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d71>.

181 Ibid.

182 Central Intelligence Agency, "National Intelligence Estimate," June 27, 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, Document 68*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d68>.

183 Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara," June 28, 1961, *ibid.*, *Document 69*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d69>.

served as the leading topics for the bulk of meetings and correspondence in Washington during 1961; U.S.-Saudi relations often received much less attention.¹⁸⁴

Despite the long-standing economic partnership and existing security agreements between the United States and Saudi Arabia, Washington held reservations over entrusting the Saudi government to fill the expanding power vacuum created by reduced British presence in the region. U.S. State Department documents reveal that the Kennedy administration believed the internal political competition between King Saud and his brother, Crown Prince Faisal, affected the King's ability to make sound decisions.¹⁸⁵ Additionally, disagreements over the existence of Israel as a Jewish state proved to be as divisive between the United States and Saudi Arabia as opposition of Soviet communism in the Middle East was uniting. King Saud's frank and open criticism of the United States' support for the "third state" irritated President Kennedy.¹⁸⁶ In one letter addressed to several Arab leaders, the President criticized King Saud's language from a previous piece of correspondence regarding the Palestinian conflict as "undiplomatic" and "insulting," and he stated that the "only redeeming feature" was when the king agreed that the Palestinian Conciliation Commission (PCC) should have the "final chance" to deal with refugee crisis.¹⁸⁷ Finally, the June 27 NIE revealed that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had little faith in the military might of Saudi Arabia, regardless of the training and support that the United States had provided for the kingdom for the near past decade. The document regarded the U.A.R. as the only true military threat to Israel, which gave "Nasser a unique claim to Arab leadership."¹⁸⁸ Nonetheless, at this time, Washington regarded Israel as the strongest military force in the Middle East, despite whatever benefits Nasser's leadership brought the U.A.R., and the administration lumped

184 J.C. Holmes, "Letter from the Ambassador to Iran (Holmes) to the Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Meyer)," August 27, 1961, *FRUS, 1961-1963, Document 102*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d102>; "Overview," *Ibid.*, accessed March 1, 2015, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17>.

185 Dean Rusk, "Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy," July 13, 1961, *ibid.*, *Document 86*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d86>.

186 Phillips Talbot, "Memorandum of Conversation," July 7, 1961, *Ibid.*, *Document 81*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d81>.

187 Rusk, "Memorandum," *Document 86*.

188 Central Intelligence Agency, "National Intelligence Estimate," *Document 68*.

Iraq and Yemen into the same group as Saudi Arabia, believing these countries to be “incapable of bringing effective military force against Israel.”¹⁸⁹

In the same meeting that Ambassador Hart praised King Saud for his strong leadership within the Arab League during the Kuwaiti crisis, he also advocated that the United States take full advantage of the strong connection that it shared with the Saudi military through the USMTM. He believed that the “regime in Saudi Arabia must surely change and new leadership [was] most likely to come from this element.”¹⁹⁰ Kennedy agreed, replying, “it was indeed very important to maintain our relationship with the [Saudi] military.”¹⁹¹ The ongoing rivalry between King Saud and his brother Prince Faisal concerned Kennedy, but this exchange between the President and Ambassador Hart also reveals that Washington underestimated the strength and resiliency of the House of Saud since the federal government had expected the royal family to fall to the wave of modernism and nationalism that was sweeping much of the rest of the Middle East at that time.

2. Dhahran Airfield

The meeting between Ambassador Hart and President Kennedy had taken place within the context of a debate over the upcoming renewal of the U.S.-Saudi Dhahran Airfield agreement. Arab nationalists had begun to use the U.S. military’s presence at the airfield as support for their argument that the United States had imperialist intentions in Saudi Arabia.¹⁹² Despite the hold that Arab nationalism was gaining over the Saudi populace, the Saudi monarchy continued to favor the U.S. military presence at Dhahran; Riyadh believed the USMTM to be particularly beneficial for Saudi security. King Saud could only keep the pressure of the Arab nationalists at bay for so long however, and

189 Dean Rusk, “Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Talbot) to Secretary of State Rusk,” November 22, 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, Document 143*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d143>.

190 Hart, “Memorandum,” *Document 71*.

191 Ibid.

192 Hart, *Saudi Arabia*, 82.

eventually he would succumb to many of their demands, including those over Dhahran Airfield.

a. King Saud Bends to the Arab Nationalists

King Saud had initially allowed the U.S. military to maintain a presence at Dhahran Airfield in exchange for military support and training—a condition agreed upon at the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (MDAA) talks in 1951, which later became the USMTM.¹⁹³ In March 1961, as the deadline approached to renew the Dhahran Airfield agreement, the king announced that he planned to terminate the airfield contract, but he simultaneously expressed a desire to maintain the USMTM provided that it cut the number of Americans down to 80 personnel and transfer them outside of Dhahran.¹⁹⁴ The king's announcement not to renew the agreement occurred on March 16 on Radio Mecca and came largely as a surprise to Washington since the two governments were still engaging in talks over the upcoming renewal at that time.¹⁹⁵ Whether it was due to miscommunication or blatant disregard for diplomatic courtesy, Riyadh's declaration was not only unexpected, but it occurred only a few hours after the American Embassy had conveyed to Washington that a joint statement regarding the future of the airfield would be made on March 18.¹⁹⁶

While the Department of State considered the Saudi king's unilateral actions offensive, it also further revealed the "shaky" state of internal politics within the kingdom.¹⁹⁷ Two days after the announcement, the Saudi Arabian ambassador reported in a message to the Under Secretary of Defense that the radio transmission had been made in haste to respond to Arab nationalists who were placing an increasing amount of pressure on the king. King Saud tried to defend his actions to the United States and not

¹⁹³ Ibid., 88.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ W.J. Stossel, "Memorandum From the Department of State Executive Secretary (Battle) to the President's Special Assistant (Dungan)," March 21, 1961, *FRUS, 1961–1963, Document 24*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d24#fnref2>.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

only make his actions appear as nonconsequential but beneficial to the U.S.-Saudi relationship. The Saudi ambassador argued that the king desired to continue to pursue a strong partnership with the United States and that he believed that the unexpected proclamation could only strengthen the relationship between Washington and Riyadh.¹⁹⁸

In an attempt to soften the image of the United States as an imperialistic force in Saudi Arabia, Washington made public statements that Dhahran Airfield belonged to the Saudi government and avoided the use of the term *base* when referring to Dhahran as much as possible.¹⁹⁹ Additionally, the United States used Dhahran Airfield as a mostly Military Air Transport Service terminal, and, at the time of the announcement, it housed 1,332 personnel and only 10 transport aircraft. During this time, however, the JCS were exploring options to modify the airfield and add “additional facilities” that would allow the military to use it as a “post-strike field.”²⁰⁰ Up to this point, the United States used Dhahran mostly for military transport, although the Department of Defense was considering expanding its use for tactical purposes.

In addition to the unpredictable nature of King Saud’s political behavior, his declining health also negatively impacted his ability to provide stable leadership to both his country and the Arab world in general. The king’s health continued to worsen throughout 1961 as details regarding the debate over Dhahran Airfield still hung in the balance, and in December he was admitted to a hospital in Boston, Massachusetts.²⁰¹ In the meantime, Crown Prince Faisal stepped in to fill the role of king during Saud’s absence although the prince rejected the title of king, and, while he made note of many issues and decisions facing the crown, Faisal declined to make any official decisions regarding national policy during that time. King Saud’s health eventually returned, and, before he left the United States, he met with President Kennedy in West Palm Beach, Florida. The meeting between the two leaders seemed to sweep aside much of the previous malcontent and suspicion that had largely characterized their relationship up to

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Hart, *Saudi Arabia*, 89.

that point, and King Saud walked out of the meeting, according to Hart, in a “euphoric” state.²⁰² Hart goes into little detail regarding King Saud’s experience at the U.S. hospital and the conversation that transpired during the meeting in Palm Beach, but the ambassador does make it clear that these two events marked a turning point in the relationship between the king and the president.

b. A Diplomatic Breakthrough

Capitalizing on the sudden upswing in relations between Riyadh and Washington—personalized hospital care and a “euphoric” meeting with the president—Ambassador Hart reengaged King Saud in talks about the airfield agreement renewal shortly after the king’s return to Saudi Arabia. In a private interview on March 11, 1962, Hart asked King Saud if, following the deliverance of Dhahran Airfield to the Saudi government, the king would be willing to allow the United States to use the airfield for noncombatant aircraft only for “repairs, refueling and rest crews.”²⁰³ King Saud agreed to this proposition, and, when asked about the number of personnel that he would allow the United States to retain at the airfield, the king told the Ambassador that “the numerical strength of [the] mission should be whatever the U.S. government considered desirable.”²⁰⁴

Hart’s diplomatic success brought relief to Washington, and, to demonstrate its gratefulness, the United States relocated its Navy communications unit from Dhahran to Bahrain without any previous request from the Saudi Arabian government. In accordance with the agreement, the Second Air Division withdrew, along with a plane assigned to Commander, Middle East Force, which had never been authorized by any agreement to be at Dhahran anyway. Hart notes that he and his colleagues also recommended to President Kennedy that the Chief of the USMTM be a position reserved for the rank of

²⁰² Ibid., 89–90.

²⁰³ Ibid., 91.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

Army general and that the Chief of the USMTM, Air Force section be a colonel—a suggestion to which both the U.S. and Saudi governments agreed.²⁰⁵

c. The U.S.-Saudi Security Paradox

Although most of the transfer of Dhahran Airfield to the Saudi government went relatively smoothly, Ambassador Hart describes several specific issues that caused concern within both governments, which are largely symbolic of the paradoxical nature of the broader U.S.-Saudi security relationship at that time. First, the Saudi government had no experience running an airfield, and Hart remained particularly concerned about government's ability to manage the facility financially. Second, recent regional political tensions had caused Saudi Arabia to dismiss many of its Egyptian teachers, leading to potential conflict between Saudi Arabia and a country that the Kennedy administration was pursuing for rapprochement. Third, despite any previous anxieties that Riyadh had expressed over a U.S. military presence at Dhahran Airfield, the Saudi government suddenly seemed alarmed about the “unhesitating readiness” that the U.S. demonstrated concerning the departure of the Second Air Division, believing the United States to be “the only strong and disinterested friend of the Kingdom.”²⁰⁶ On one hand, like Dhahran Airfield, the United States valued the economic and strategic advantage that Saudi Arabia brought to the table, but Washington doubted the Saudi kingdom's competency in basic defense matters and its capacity to be an effective stabilizing political force in the region. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia feared that the United States was becoming another imperialist force that would only continue to undermine the potential of the Arab world, yet the Saudi government's anxiety over the easy and rapid departure of the U.S. military from Dhahran suggests that the royal family recognized its dependence on U.S. support.

3. Operation Hardsurface

The historian Ethan Nadelmann writes that Kennedy's approach toward foreign diplomacy largely excluded Eisenhower's “rigid bipolarity” and that the president

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 93.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

pursued a more open policy with many non-aligned states while encouraging the development of Third World countries.²⁰⁷ Additionally, he argues that the Kennedy administration deliberately placed Middle Eastern affairs low on its list of foreign policy priorities because Washington was “already crowded by far more pressing problems.”²⁰⁸ Washington tried to maintain this distant, hands-off approach toward the Middle East during the Yemeni Civil War of 1962–1967, but the effect that the crisis had on the stability of the region forced Kennedy’s hand into taking action. Nadelmann writes,

if the Jordanian and, especially, the Saudi Monarchs had not involved themselves with the civil war, American interests would have been limited to ensuring free passage through the Bab el-Mandeb straits and maintaining the adjacent British position in Aden and the South Arabian Federation. However, the decision of the monarchs to come to al-Badr’s assistance created the danger of instability in both fragile monarchies, with the concomitant threat to the oil flow and Arab-Israeli “peace.”²⁰⁹

Had the Yemeni Civil War remained internal to the borders of Yemen, both Kennedy and King Saud would have met their foreign policy objectives of creating and maintaining their distance from one another.

In many ways, the Yemeni Civil War served as an Arab proxy war between Egypt and Saudi Arabia that ultimately led to the intervention of the Great Powers. By and large, Nasser’s wounded pride over the recent break-up of the U.A.R. drove him to take a vested interest in the Yemeni conflict since he saw it as an opportunity to redeem himself as a strong and powerful Arab leader. Arguably, King Saud, who remained locked in competition with Nasser to be the leader of the Arab world, introduced Saudi Arabia to the Yemeni Civil War so as not to be outdone by the Egyptian president. Some historians disagree; Fawaz A. Gerges contends that Saudi Arabia would have involved itself in the conflict regardless of Nasser’s actions, arguing that a successful coup against the Yemeni Imamate would pose a direct security threat to Saudi Arabia, especially if it were to be

207 Ethan Nadelmann, “Setting the Stage: American Policy Toward the Middle East, 1961–1966,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14, no. 4 (November 1982), 438, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/162975>.

208 Ibid., 437.

209 Ibid., 443.

replaced with an “Egyptian-style revolutionary regime.”²¹⁰ Regardless, the upheaval combined with the movement of Egyptian troops into Yemen terrified the Saudi crown, resulting in a cry for help from Riyadh to Washington.²¹¹

a. Playing Favorites

President Kennedy tried to keep the United States out of the Yemeni conflict as long as possible. In a meeting in Washington on October 5, 1962, Crown Prince Faisal asked for assistance from the president in collecting information on Nasser while preventing the Egyptian leader from taking aggressive political or military action in Yemen. Kennedy, who had recently authorized aid for the U.A.R. in the Yemeni conflict, replied with a generic political response. The president stated that the United States felt sympathy for Saudi Arabia’s pursuit toward regional peace and stability, but he believed that the Saudi king put too much faith in the ability of the United States to influence the goals and decisions of other foreign leaders. The president did promise the Crown Prince that the U.S. government would soon make available for purchase multiple supersonic jet fighters (F-5A’s) about which the Saudi government had previously inquired. Kennedy also attempted to initiate a conversation about the USMTM, but Faisal responded that he would leave such a conversation to the United States Embassy in Jeddah and the Saudi Minister of Defense.²¹²

President Kennedy’s attempts to avoid U.S. military involvement in support of Saudi Arabia were short lived, however. The president even endeavored to employ an “economic development” approach in which the United States gave \$431.8 million of food aid to Egypt during the years from 1963 through 1965—a move that Washington hoped would help bring internal stability to the country.²¹³ Both the Saudi and Jordanian kings saw Kennedy’s increased support of Nasser as an attempt by the U.S. federal

210 Fawaz A. Gerges, “The Kennedy Administration and the Egyptian-Saudi Conflict in Yemen: Co-opting Arab Nationalism,” *The Middle East Journal* 49, no.2 (Spring 1995), 292, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4328805>.

211 Ibid.

212 “Memorandum,” October 5, 1962, *FRUS, 1961–1963, Document 71*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v17/d81#fn3>.

213 Gerges, “Kennedy,” 294.

government to use Egypt as the United States' new "instrument of influence" in the region.²¹⁴ King Saud refused to accept what he perceived to be an underhanded move by Washington, and he responded in kind by reaching out to the House of Saud's once primary financial and military supporter—Great Britain—for help.²¹⁵

On September 26, 1962 the Yemeni Imamate fell. The new republican regime established itself as the new Yemeni government under Brigadier General Abd Allah al-Sallal, and the role that Egypt played in making the revolution possible was apparent in Washington.²¹⁶ The Soviet Union also took a position in the conflict and recognized the new republican Yemeni regime in October 1962, which the Kennedy administration largely saw itself as having no choice but to follow suit in doing in December of that year.²¹⁷ In an attempt to maintain the support of Saudi Arabia and Jordan following its recognition of the new Yemeni regime, the Kennedy administration promised the kings of both countries that the United States had "intentions to stand by [the kingdoms of Saudi Arabia and Jordan] and to circumscribe Nasser's influences in the Arabian Peninsula."²¹⁸ Kennedy had hoped that this balanced, diplomatic approach to supporting all sides in the conflict (with the exception of the recently toppled Yemeni Imamate) would return stability to the region. Instead, Nasser misinterpreted the recognition of the new Yemeni government by the United States and Russia as support for Egypt's continued assistance for the Yemeni rebels, who Riyadh viewed to be a direct threat to its Saudi security.²¹⁹

Washington's recognition of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) came on the heels of a letter that had gone out to U.S. embassies in the Eastern Hemisphere. The letter revealed that the United States planned to recognize the Y.A.R. because Washington believed that this action would put an end to the Arab proxy war. The letter told the

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Hart, *Saudi*, 136–139.

²¹⁷ Gerges, "Kennedy," 306.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

embassies to communicate to their host governments that “following on U.S. approaches to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the Y.A.R., which were designed to obtain eventual disengagement in the Yemen, U.S. recognition of the Y.A.R. in the near future was likely.”²²⁰ Any attempts toward appeasing the Middle Eastern governments by the Kennedy administration failed miserably, however, and, on January 7, 1963, Egypt, which had already been bombing many coastal villages in Saudi Arabia, began to conduct airstrikes against Najran.²²¹ Thus, far, Kennedy’s approach toward the Yemeni conflict backfired because of the regional political context within which it occurred. His largely *ideological* approach, which sought to pacify the Middle East through the recognition of the so-called republic regime’s overthrow of an Imamate, fanned the flames of the ongoing rivalry between the Saudi Arabian and Egyptian rulers, which had by now become a military conflict.

b. Kennedy Shifts His Approach

Egypt’s violence against the Hejazi coast changed President Kennedy’s mind about his approach to the conflict between Egypt and Saudi Arabia; in January 1963, President Kennedy decided that it was time for military intervention.²²² On June 13, 1963, the JCS informed Commander in Chief, Strike Command and Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces, Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean that the President had approved the deployment of eight F-100D tactical fighter aircraft and one support transport aircraft to Saudi Arabia.²²³ Washington codenamed this movement *Operation Hardsurface*, which had a two-part mission statement. The first part directed the U.S. Air Force “to conduct training exercises and operations with Saudi Air Forces in cooperation with USMTM as part of our overall efforts through the years to improve Saudi forces and as evidence of continuing U.S. interest in the internal stability and security of Saudi

²²⁰ Hart, *Saudi*, 152.

²²¹ Ibid., 154.

²²² Ibid., 165.

²²³ “Editorial Note,” *FRUS, 1961–1963, Document 270*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v18/d270>.

Arabia.”²²⁴ The second part of the mission statement was “to provide a limited air defense capability to Saudi Arabia to deter U.A.R. air operations over Saudi Arabia should such air operations be resumed.”²²⁵

Diplomatically, *Operation Hardsurface* was more than just a demonstration of renewed U.S. support for Saudi Arabia.²²⁶ The operation represented another attempt by Washington to stabilize the Middle East, and the Yemeni Civil War was only one of several Middle East conflicts that the administration was juggling at this time. Militarily, Kennedy intended *Operation Hardsurface* to be a “symbolic deterrent” only and not representative of any true desire to engage in military conflict, and he dictated a strict set of rules of engagement under which all U.S. aircraft were prohibited to engage the enemy without direct approval from the president himself.²²⁷

c. Drawdown and Fallout

On December 24, 1963, nearly a month after Kennedy’s assassination, the JCS expressed concern to Secretary of Defense McNamara over the poor state of the aircraft and their inability to continue with their present mission.²²⁸ The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff General Maxwell D. Taylor believed that the Saudi Arabian Air Force now possessed the capability to defend itself against Egyptian aggression, and he recommended the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Dhahran at a sooner date than the State Department’s previously proposed date of January 31, 1964. A concurrent UN mission to Saudi Arabia was scheduled to withdraw on January 4, and General Taylor argued that, with UN forces gone, the remaining American aircraft would be an inadequate force to provide continued deterrence against Egypt in support of *Operation Hardsurface*. The

²²⁴ Dean Rusk, “Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy,” June 12, 1963, *ibid.*, *Document 268*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v18/d268>.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ Douglas Little, “The New Frontier on the Nile: JFK, Nasser, and Arab Nationalism,” *Journal of American History* 75, no. 2 (September 1988), 520, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1887868>.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 521.

²²⁸ Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Memorandum from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to Secretary of Defense McNamara,” December 24, 1963, *FRUS, 1961–1963, Document 393*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v18/d393>.

general argued that any aggressive action committed by Egypt after the State Department's proposed later date would force the U.S. Air Force "to respond militarily or risk loss of credibility of its military power, not only in the Middle East, but world-wide."²²⁹ Washington ultimately decided to go with the State Department's recommendation because of a previous deal that it had struck with Crown Prince Faisal, which stated that if the United States kept its planes in Saudi Arabia until January 31 then Riyadh would remain out of the Yemeni Civil War for a specified time.²³⁰ A letter from Crown Prince Faisal to President Johnson dated January 17, 1964 reveals that U.S.-Saudi security relations maintained a mostly positive tone during the drawdown of *Operation Hardsurface*, possibly because the Crown Prince had taken over much of the correspondence for Riyadh with Washington at this point.²³¹

Operation Hardsurface proved detrimental for the Kennedy administration for two reasons. First, by giving into King Saud's requests for military assistance without making reciprocal demands, Kennedy gave up a bargaining chip that he could have used to push his reform agenda in Saudi Arabia.²³² Middle East scholar Rachel Bronson stresses that President Kennedy desired to convince the Saudi monarchy to reform and modernize Saudi Arabia because he believed that westernizing the kingdom would keep Saudi Arabia from falling into communism.²³³ Bronson writes that *Operation Hardsurface* "marked the end of Kennedy's reform agenda"²³⁴ in Saudi Arabia, and, furthermore, once Kennedy agreed to send aid to the Kingdom, he lost any real influence over King Saud to modernize.²³⁵ For example, shortly after Kennedy's initial

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ R.W. Komer, "Memorandum From Robert W. Komer of the National Security Council Staff to President Johnson," January 31, 1964, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, vol. 21, Near East Region, Arabian Peninsula, Document 321*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v21/d321>.

²³¹ Benjamin H. Read, "Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Read) to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Bundy)," January 17, 1964, *FRUS, 1964-1968, Document 319*, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v21/d319#fn2>.

²³² Bronson, Thicker, 88.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

authorization of the operation, the Saudi government caught wind that the U.S. forces coming to Saudi Arabia's aid would include Jewish personnel and objected strongly. Kennedy rejected Riyadh's request to remove the Jewish men from the roster, arguing that such a demand "hurt the Saudi cause," and although Jewish Americans did participate in the operation, Riyadh never retracted its request, changed its position or apologized.²³⁶ Kennedy failed to seize the opportunity presented by situation that would help him pursue his objective of reforming Saudi Arabia because he replied too hastily to King Saud's plea for help.

Second, *Operation Hardsurface* put Kennedy increasingly at odds with Nasser, who arguably had more at stake in the Yemeni conflict than Kennedy.²³⁷ While King Saud remained true to his promise to disengage from the conflict, Egyptian troops continued to frustrate the United States by occupying the Arabian Peninsula throughout *Operation Hardsurface* and as late as October 1963.²³⁸ Kennedy failed in his efforts toward diplomatic rapprochement and military deterrence with and against Egypt through *Operation Hardsurface*, and Washington ultimately resorted to denying aid to Egypt by amending the PL-480 bill to prevent any country from receiving aid from the United States that was actively "engaging in or preparing for aggressive military efforts' against the United States or its allies."²³⁹

D. CONCLUSION

U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East during the Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations was neither entirely *ideological* nor *analytical*. While the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines possessed *ideological* objectives, particularly preventing the spread of communism, and while Kennedy's convictions that the developing Third World countries and influencing Arab nationalists could do the same, all three presidents still incorporated an *analytical* approach into their policies. For

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Little, "The New Frontier," 524.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

instance, the construction of Dhahran Airfield and Washington's increased financial support of the theocratic kingdom through the 50/50 Agreement suggest that defending U.S. oil interests in Saudi Arabia was just as important as preventing the spread of communism to the Truman administration. Likewise, although President Eisenhower believed a strong relationship with Nasser was the key to avoiding the spread of communism in the Middle East, Eisenhower also believed that, through Nasser, he could ensure regional stability, which would in turn keep Middle Eastern oil cheap and accessible.

As Kennedy sought to distance the United States from Saudi Arabia, so Ibn Saud also tried to create diplomatic space between the two countries during the early 1960s. Kennedy's goal of limiting communism's influence by developing Third World countries and by continuing Eisenhower's efforts to build a relationship with Nasser caused his administration to decrease diplomatic involvement with Riyadh. Likewise, pressure from Arab nationalists drove King Saud to push for a reduction of the U.S. military footprint in his kingdom in places like Dhahran Airfield. Prior to the Yemeni conflict, Kennedy's *ideological* foreign policy goals were loosening the bonds of the U.S.-Saudi partnership. Opposing interests, new approaches to foreign policy and personality conflicts between President Kennedy and King Saud created friction between the U.S. and Saudi governments, but Nasser's aggression during the Yemeni Civil War drove the United States and Saudi Arabia to continue to cooperate, albeit reluctantly, during the early 1960s. The recommitment of U.S. forces to Dhahran Airfield in *Operation Hardsurface* served as a culminating event for the early U.S.-Saudi security relationship. U.S. intervention in the Yemeni Civil War is significant because it epitomizes a reoccurring theme during the Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy presidencies in U.S.-Saudi relations. While Washington tried to take a largely *ideological* approach to foreign policy during this time, *analytical* security objectives, namely oil and geostrategic interests, ultimately trumped the United States' *ideological* goals in the Middle East. Within this shifting framework, Kennedy had no choice but to forgo his efforts to create a U.S.-Egypt partnership and provide protection to Saudi Arabia.

V. U.S.–SAUDI SECURITY CHALLENGES OF TODAY

The history of U.S.-Saudi security relations reveals that both countries have relied on each other consistently to meet their security objectives. Furthermore, past events demonstrate that the United States' interests in Saudi Arabia have included but extended beyond oil for over half of a century, contradicting the largely stereotype idea that the United States' only interest in the Middle East lies in its petroleum reserves. Certainly, oil served as the main driver for interaction between the two states initially—CASOC's push for Washington's financial assistance and President Roosevelt's Foreign Petroleum Policy played a major role in the early stages of the development of this relationship. Roosevelt's extension of the Lend-Lease Act during World War II and subsequent developments in the early stages of the Cold War, culminating in *Operation Hardsurface*, demonstrate that a strong diplomatic relationship with Saudi Arabia can serve as a critical piece of the United States' *analytical* security strategy. The geographic location of Saudi Arabia and the House of Saud's influence in the Arab world offer the United States a great advantage in U.S. Middle Eastern foreign policy and military strategy. Additionally, Saudi oil is valuable for more reasons than just economic ones; the U.S. military and the militaries of its allies and its enemies all depend upon petroleum products to fuel their ships, aircraft and other weapon systems, making the vast Saudi reserves central to U.S. security interests.

While parallels can be drawn between some of the major issues surrounding the U.S.-Saudi security relationship today and those discussed in the previous chapters, other themes are new. Furthermore, most of these themes directly affect the security interests of the United States and Saudi Arabia—human rights being the major exception. This section will discuss some of the major issues that are often included in the dialogue regarding the U.S.-Saudi security partnership of today: Iran, the resurgence in Russian aggression, radical Islam, Saudi Arabia's economy and human rights.

A. IRAN

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran originated well before the formation of their modern states. The separation of cultures, languages and political boundaries extend to the time of the Persian Empire, ancient Arabia and beyond. As Islam spread from the Arabian Peninsula, most living in the Iranian plateau soon converted to the religion. The Persians eventually even distinguished themselves from Arabs living on the peninsula in the practice of their shared religion; today, Saudi Arabia is largely a Sunni country, while over 90 percent of Iranians are practicing Shi'ites.²⁴⁰ Rulers from both countries have been competing for regional control and influence since ancient times. Today, the modern states of Iran and Saudi Arabia continue to remain at odds with one another for many reasons. This section will explore two major issues currently affecting the security of Saudi Arabia with respect to Iran: the potential of a nuclear Iran and economic competition.

1. A Nuclear Iran

The ongoing nuclear talks between the P5+1 states and Iran could lead to increased conflict in the Middle East while also driving a wedge between U.S.-Saudi relations. Should Iran ever obtain a nuclear weapon, the result would likely energize existing sentiments of the centuries-old Sunni-Shi'a power struggle in the region. Naval Postgraduate School professor S. Paul Kapur points to the Indian-Pakistani conflicts of the late 1990s as one example of how nuclear weapons can embolden states militarily, suggesting that a nuclear Iran might "adopt risky policies that have destabilizing effects similar to those in South Asia."²⁴¹ Additionally, some members of the Saudi government fear that the new manner in which Iran could politically assert itself as a regional nuclear power could encourage Saudi Arabia's radical Shi'a population to increase their

²⁴⁰ "Iran," CIA World Factbook, accessed July 21, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html>.

²⁴¹ S. Paul Kapur, "Ten Years of Instability in a Nuclear South Asia," *International Security* 33, no. 2 (Fall, 2008), 94, doi: 10.1162/isec.2008.33.2.71.

belligerent behavior toward the state.²⁴² If the relaxed nuclear regulations on Tehran were ever to lead to Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon, it could exacerbate age-old tensions in the region, regardless of whether Iran actually employs the weapon.

2. Economic Competition

Iran and Saudi Arabia are both oil powerhouses, and the two countries are currently locked in economic competition to become the primary oil supplier of several major Asian countries. Saudi Arabia is winning for the moment; Iran currently struggles to meet its domestic economic solvency threshold of \$90 per barrel, and Saudi Arabia's proximity and vast oil fields would make it an easy target for a nuclear and emboldened Iran.²⁴³ Saudi Arabia, the only Middle Eastern country that produces more oil than Iran, is India's largest oil provider—a position that Iran covets—and, until recently, Saudi Arabia was also China's.²⁴⁴ Saudi Arabia's intentions for its oil trade with China and India extend beyond economic ones; much like Washington did with Saudi Arabia, Riyadh is also expanding its international security support base through its economic partnerships. Over the past ten years, Saudi Arabia and India have negotiated a series of oil-for-security agreements, including both the Delhi Declaration of 2006 and the Riyadh Declaration of 2010.²⁴⁵ These deals and others have resulted in “increased security cooperation, joint research and development initiatives, and reciprocal extradition policies” between the two countries and are largely a result of Saudi Arabia's fears that Iran will soon become a Nuclear Weapon State (NWS).²⁴⁶ Previous Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal argued to the Chinese government that a nuclear Iran would “foment instability” in the Middle East, and he has asked China to stop its oil

242 Aaron Mattis, “Oil Sheik-Down,” *Harvard International Review* 32, no. 1 (Spring, 2010), 11, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com.libproxy.nps.edu/ehost/detail/detail?sid=c7c14c8b-31e0-45a9-a43d-62d7e6ff9616%40sessionmgr4005&crlhashurl=login.aspx%253fdirect%253dtrue%2526scope%253dsite%2526db%253dbth%2526AN%253d50794995%2526msid%253d-419423033&hid=4214&vid=0&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZTlzaXRl#db=bth&AN=50794995>.

243 Ibid.

244 Ibid., 10.

245 Ibid.

246 Ibid.

trade with Iran altogether.²⁴⁷ The economic competition that exists between Saudi Arabia and Iran fits within the greater context of a political and military rivalry, which directly impacts the region's security and stability.

B. RESURGENCE OF RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE

Russia today is not the fallen Soviet Union of the 1990s, nor is it the same type of threat that drove the United States and Saudi Arabia to cooperate during the 1950s and 1960s. Today's Russia is actively pursuing increased political, military and economic influence in the Arctic, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Middle East. What distinguishes the Russia of today from the Russia of Truman's presidency is that it no longer cloaks its aggression in a desire to spread a certain ideology—communism—but it instead openly seeks economic growth and political influence through territorial expansion. While economics play some motivational role in Russia's aggression, much of Russia's foreign policy is driven simply by its competition with China and the United States to be the most influential power in the region.²⁴⁸ While it may not be immediately obvious, Russia's recent spike in military, political and economic aggression affects the U.S.-Saudi security relationship. The following sections will examine how Moscow is currently using its political and economic influence, in addition to its nuclear technology, to change the shape of Middle Eastern and global politics, which has the potential to create a rift in U.S.-Saudi security relations.

1. Economic Influence

In May 2015, Russia surpassed Saudi Arabia as China's largest oil exporter—a position that Saudi Arabia had enjoyed since 2005. The change came largely as the result of a 25-year deal struck in October 2013 between the Russian oil company Rosneft and the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC).²⁴⁹ Furthermore, not all of this oil

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 11.

²⁴⁸ Alexander Cooley, *Great Games Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 72–73.

²⁴⁹ David McNew, "Russia Overtakes Saudi Arabia to Become Biggest Crude Exporter to China," *Russia Today*, June 23, 2015, <http://rt.com/business/269146-russia-china-oil-trade/>.

will come from Russia; the Former Soviet Union (FSU) state Kazakhstan is also supplying a fraction of this oil. Some estimate that the seven million tons of oil per year that the Kazakh oil company, KazMunaiGas (KMG), currently ships as a result of this agreement, called the Russian-Kazakh oil swap arrangement, is likely to grow to ten million tons per year before the arrangement expires in roughly a decade.²⁵⁰

In 1994 the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev floated the idea of a Eurasian Union of States while speaking at the Lomonosov Moscow State University. Throughout the next two decades, the Kazakh government designed and developed several economic agreements with Russia and other FSU states that centered mostly on customs agreements. In January 2012, many of these treaties came into effect to create a “Single Economic Space” between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia.²⁵¹ In 2014, these three states signed a treaty, resulting in the creation of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), which Kyrgyzstan and Armenia also joined later that year.²⁵² The stated intent of the EAEU is to be an “international organization for regional economic integration” that “provides for the free movement of goods, services, capital and labor, pursues coordinated, harmonized and single policy in the sectors determined by the Treaty and international agreements with the Union.”²⁵³ In effect, the recently created EAEU is an economic agreement between Russia and several Former Soviet Union (FSU) states, which increases Russia’s ability to re-exert its economic influence on Central Asia and the Caucasus.

In many ways, the sanctions placed on Russia by the United States in response to the Ukraine crisis have strengthened the EAEU. These sanctions forced the international oil company ExxonMobil to withdraw support from Rosneft in projects in Siberia and the Arctic. Driven out of these regions, Exxon now assists Kazakhstan in the development of one of its most logistically challenging oilfields, Kashagan, which is behind schedule by nearly a decade and has suffered a dramatic rise in development

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ “Timeline,” Eurasian Economic Union, accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#about-countries>.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ “General Information,” Eurasian Economic Union, accessed June 18, 2015, <http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#about-info>.

costs.²⁵⁴ ExxonMobil's efforts in Kazakhstan is helping the Central Asian country keep its commitment to Russia, which is, in turn, helping Russia keep its commitment to China as its new primary petroleum exporter.

Russia's cooperation with Kazakhstan to reach its economic goals with its new partner, China, and Russia's general influence within the EAEU highlights one example of Russia's new post-Soviet influence in the Eastern Hemisphere. Speculatively, Russia, leveraging not only its resources but also its regional political clout to boost its economy, could expand its influence to other parts of the Eastern Hemisphere as well. Saudi Arabia holds roughly 268 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, while Kazakhstan holds only 30 billion barrels.²⁵⁵ Oil and natural gas drives the economy of Russia, and its recent cooperation with Kazakhstan reveals that Russia is now looking outside of its own borders to expand its production and profits.²⁵⁶ While existing pipelines and Central Asia's history and geographic location make the FSU states in Central Asia the more likely partners of Russia today, future economic and security agreements between Russia and Saudi Arabia are not outside of the realm of possibility.

2. Russia and a Nuclear Saudi Arabia

In addition to being a major export, oil serves as Saudi Arabia's leading domestic energy resource today.²⁵⁷ The country is pursuing new options however, which has the potential to significantly alter Saudi Arabia's foreign policy. According to the World Nuclear Association, Riyadh plans to spend over \$80 billion over the next 20 years to build 16 nuclear reactors. The Saudi government aims to bring its first nuclear reactor online in 2022, and, by 2040, it projects that 15 percent of Saudi Arabia's power will

²⁵⁴ Angus Miller and Shamil Yenikeeff, "Oil's Well in Central Asia," *Foreign Affairs*, May 19, 2015, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-05-19/oils-well-central-asia>.

²⁵⁵ "International Energy Statistics," U.S. Energy Information Administration, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/cfapps/ipdbproject/iedindex3.cfm?tid=5&pid=57&aid=6>.

²⁵⁶ "Oil and Natural Gas Sales Accounted for 68% of Russia's Total Export Revenues in 2013," U.S. Energy Information Administration, July 23, 2014, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.cfm?id=17231>.

²⁵⁷ "Saudi Arabia," CIA World Factbook, accessed July 21, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html>

come from nuclear sources.²⁵⁸ In June 2015, the governments of Saudi Arabia and Russia signed a nuclear energy deal in St. Petersburg that was “the first in the history of Russia-Saudi relations to create a legal framework for cooperation between the nations in the field of nuclear energy.”²⁵⁹ In regards to what this new agreement might do for Russia’s economic influence on Saudi Arabia, Russian Energy Minister Aleksandr Novak has stated, “Russia doesn’t aim to replace existing partners in oil and gas cooperation, but rather wants to establish new ones.”²⁶⁰

Saudi Arabia, a state that once cooperated with the United States to deter Russian aggression, now seems to be looking to Russia for assistance in its energy endeavors, but the recent agreement between Russia and Saudi Arabia possibly revolves around more than energy. While in St. Petersburg for the nuclear energy talks in June, Saudi ambassador to Russia, Abdulrahman Al-Rassi, described Russia as playing an “important” role within the Middle East and stated that Moscow had the responsibility to “maintain stability and security in the world.”²⁶¹ Al-Rassi’s words remain only words at this point, but the assistance that Russia is offering Saudi Arabia in its domestic energy development could cause the Saudi government to overlook many *ideological* challenges regarding cooperation with Russia—just as the United States and Saudi Arabia did during the Cold War. Should Riyadh apply a purely *analytical* approach to its relationship with Russia, a security partnership with its old enemy might be the missing ingredient to help Saudi Arabia’s achieve its new nuclear objectives, which Russia has promised to help deliver.

3. Shifting Alignments

The supposedly thawing relationship between Saudi Arabia and Russia coincides chronologically with the U.S.-Iran nuclear talks. In a meeting on May 17, 2015 with

258 “Nuclear Power in Saudi Arabia,” World Nuclear Association, accessed July 14, 2015, <http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Countries-O-S/Saudi-Arabia/>.

259 “Russia and Saudi Arabia Ink Nuclear Energy Deal, Exchange Invites,” *Russia Today*, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://rt.com/news/268198-russia-saudi-nuclear-agreements/>.

260 Ibid.

261 Ibid.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir at Riyadh Air Base, United States Secretary of State John Kerry stated that “throughout the P5+1 negotiating process, we’ve been constantly consulting with Saudi Arabia, and we will continue to do so.”²⁶² Kerry insists that both Washington and Riyadh have engaged in talks about “ways in which the United States and Saudi Arabia can cooperate going forward” in the context of a nuclear Iran.²⁶³

While Kerry’s assertion arguably represents statements made by a Saudi government that feels that it has no other choice but to accept the P5+1 talks with Iran as an inevitable reality, Riyadh’s true sentiments and its intent for future security cooperation with the United States and the West remains hypothetical for now. For instance, Saudi researcher Mansour al-Marzouki argues that the potential of a nuclear Iran is providing Saudi Arabia with the incentive to restore the Middle East to its pre-2011 Arab Spring political situation, which he characterizes as a power struggle strictly between the two major forces of the region: Saudi Arabia and Iran. Al-Marzouki contends that the rise of the non-state actor and an additional “third camp”—Turkey, Qatar and the Muslim Brotherhood—has caused Saudi Arabia to lose regional authority and has simultaneously resulted in an increase in Iran’s influence in the Middle East.²⁶⁴ Al-Marzouki cites Saudi Arabia’s recent military action against the Houthi rebels in Yemen as a leading example of Riyadh’s attempt to curb non-state actors’ aggression in the region. The analyst contends that the House of Saud is attempting to “transform the political equation from a balance between the state and non-state actors into a balance between a government and an opposition,”²⁶⁵ thus restraining Iran’s ability to prosper from the disintegration of the state system in the Gulf and the Levant.

Additionally, al-Marzouki suggests that Saudi Arabia would likely pursue new alliances, although he does not specify which countries those new partners might be.

²⁶² “Remarks with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir,” U.S. Department of State, May 7, 2015, accessed July 2, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2015/05/241991.htm>.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Mansour al-Marzouki, Nasser Ahmed Bin Ghaith, Seif Da’na and Jonathan Cook, “Why Saudi Arabia and Israel Oppose Iran Nuclear Deal,” *Al Jazeera*, April 14, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/saudi-arabia-israel-oppose-iran-nuclear-deal-150401061906177.html>.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

United Arab Emirates researcher Nasser Ahmed Bin Ghaith argues that the loosening of nuclear sanctions against Iran will soon lead to the relaxing of economic sanctions on the country, potentially introducing approximately 1.5 million barrels of oil per day into Western markets.²⁶⁶ Bin Ghaith suggests that the resulting economic effect would lead to a global drop in oil prices, and, in this case, Saudi Arabia would be wise to terminate its security agreements with the West in favor strengthening its diplomatic and security ties with existing members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and, in addition, to Pakistan and Turkey.²⁶⁷

A strong, future Russo-Saudi security partnership as a result of the P5+1 nuclear talks with Iran is a somewhat speculative idea. However, the June 2015 talks in St. Petersburg highlight that economic and energy cooperation between the Russia and Saudi Arabia is not only a possibility, but it is becoming a reality. Chapter II emphasizes how the early Saudi kings, wary of imperialist intentions, would have vehemently opposed economic or security cooperation with Soviet Russia. Just as Saudi Arabia has sought to strengthen its security ties with its economic partner India through the Delhi Declaration of 2006 and the Riyadh Declaration of 2010, so might Saudi Arabia take the same approach toward Russia, should the United States and the other P5+1 countries continue to relax their policies on Iran.

C. RADICAL ISLAMISM

The effect that radical Islamism has had in Saudi Arabia is complex. Modern-day radical Islamist militancy has its roots largely in the teachings of Sayyid Qutb, a previous member of the Muslim Brotherhood, who strongly advocated against the rise of secularist, socialist and nationalist movements within the Muslim world in the Middle East during the 1950s and 1960s. Executed by the Egyptian government in 1966, Qutb's book *Milestones* laid much of the groundwork for the basic ideology and strategies of present day Islamist militant groups. Qutb introduced six major themes that remain at the core doctrine of the majority of radical Islamist groups today: "*jahiliyah* (ignorance);

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

tawhid (monotheism); *hakimiyat Allah* (God's sovereignty); *takfir* (the right of faithful Muslims to declare other Muslims to be infidels); *wala wal bara* (loyalty and disassociation); and *jihad* and *istishhad* (striving and martyrdom in the path of God)."²⁶⁸

Naval Postgraduate School professor Mohammed M. Hafez writes that modern radical militant Islamism is comprised of at least three major subgroups: *Islamic nationalism*, *transnational Islamism* and *revolutionary Islamism*.²⁶⁹ *Islamic nationalism* focuses much of its efforts on the expulsion and eradication of foreign occupiers— Hamas and its fight against Israel would fall into this category—while *transnational Islamism* seeks to wage a global war against *kafirs*, or nonbelievers, and 'far enemies' such as the West.²⁷⁰ While groups belonging to these two categories possibly pose at least some challenge to Saudi Arabian security, *revolutionary Islamism* has historically presented the greatest threat to the Saudi government because it "seeks to transform the existing political order in any given state or national government through mass mobilization or violent activism."²⁷¹ Historically, *revolutionary Islamism* has been the largest radical Islamist threat within Saudi Arabia.

The autocratic nature of the Saudi government has made it particularly vulnerable to *revolutionary Islamism*. Islamist activism shares many characteristics of other social movements, including repertoires, organizational structures and collective identities, but the particular political environment of the Middle East in general often drives many Islamist groups to radicalize. By using "political exclusion and repression to maintain rule," governments often force dissenting citizens to "organize through informal networks and build collective identities through these networks; and it is this character of the Islamist movement which makes it distinct from other social movements."²⁷²

²⁶⁸ Mohammed M. Hafez, "Roots of Islamist Radicalization in the MENA," in *Governance in the Middle East and North Africa: A Handbook*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 90.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 94.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 94, 95.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 94.

²⁷² Diane Singerman, "The Networked World of Islamist Social Movements," in *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, ed. Wicktorowicz, Quintan, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 143–144.

Authoritarian governments of the Middle East make participation in political activity much more difficult for the average citizen, and, therefore, oppressive regimes assist in solidifying the collective identity of opposition groups through shared experiences of repression. Many Middle Eastern states contribute to the radicalization of Islamist groups by taking away citizens' ability to vote or protest, leading some to believe that the only vehicle through which they can communicate their platform is violence.²⁷³

Saudi Arabia belongs in this category. The government of Saudi Arabia is a monarchy absent of political parties and bases its legal system on a strict Sunni interpretation of Sharia law.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, the theocratic nature of the Saudi government only complicates the political construct in which citizens can actively participate in political events. For example, while the 85–90 percent of the population that is Sunni might welcome a Sunni government that enforces a certain interpretation of Sharia law, the remaining citizens may find many of Riyadh's policies particularly repressive, since the government restricts most forms of religious expression that fail to comply with authorized interpretations of Sunni Islam.²⁷⁵ The very structure of Saudi Arabia's government makes the country particularly susceptible to radical Islamist movements.

Activism driven by religious dissent among citizens with their government has existed within Saudi Arabia since at least the 1950s, if not earlier. The motivational source for activism in the 1950s originated outside the country however, as Egyptian President Nasser stirred the opposing sentiments of Saudi Arabia's Shi'ite population, particularly within the security sector, resulting in multiple coup attempts. Decades later, in 1979, religious insurgents briefly took control of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, propagating a message that the House of Saud was "corrupt, un-Islamic and far too permissive in allowing Western cultural influence to penetrate the Kingdom."²⁷⁶ The

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ "Saudi Arabia," CIA World Factbook, accessed July 4, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sa.html>.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ David Dunford, "The Kingdom: Can the Magic Last?" in *Governance in the Middle East and North Africa: A Handbook*, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 243.

supposed Western-influenced Saudi government responded to the mosque takeover by executing all 63 of the survivors who participated in the terrorist event. In November 1990, the Saudi government confiscated the passports of a group of women who participated in a peaceful protest for vehicle driving rights in Riyadh. In May 1993, the Saudi government arrested and interrogated a group of religious leaders from the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR), which supported many Western-themed ideas, such as universal human rights, and the government had them fired from their jobs. From November 1995 until 2004, a string of violent political attacks occurred in Saudi Arabia, which killed 35 people and injured 160, and most evidence strongly suggests that Saudi nationals carried out these attacks. The perpetrators often directed their assaults at U.S. and other foreign military personnel, including a car bomb that killed five Americans and two Indian nationals outside the workplaces of U.S. advisers to the Saudi Arabian National Guard in 1995 and a truck bomb planted near U.S. Air Force housing in al-Khobar that same year.²⁷⁷

The rise of ISIS has compounded the traditional *revolutionary Islamist* threat in Saudi Arabia and added a *transnational Islamist* element. In November 2014, ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi created an audio recording encouraging Muslims to stand up against the House of Saud, who he claims unlawfully controls the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina. He encouraged the “sons of Al-Haramayn,” meaning sons of Mecca and Medina, to “draw your swords and divorce life, because there should be no security for the Saloul,” which is a pejorative description of the House of Saud.²⁷⁸ In this same recording, Baghdadi expressed plans to expand ISIS’s territory to include the states of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Libya, Algeria and Egypt.²⁷⁹ The leader urged Saudi dissenters of their government to execute “lone wolf” attacks and “light the earth with fire against all dictators.”²⁸⁰ Baghdadi’s attempt to use Saudi nationals reveals that one of his major

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 244.

²⁷⁸ Mohamad Bazzi, “ISIS, Saudi Arabia, and a New Wave of Terrorist Violence,” *New Yorker*, June 29, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/a-new-wave-of-terrorist-violence>.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

strategies is to build upon the *revolutionary Islamist* sentiments that already exist in Saudi Arabia to carry out his *transnational Islamist* campaign.

Radical Islamism is not just a threat to the United States and the West. The movement affects many Middle Eastern governments, including the Saudi regime. Moreover, both countries share the same *transnational Islamist* threats such as ISIS, which seek to destroy the peace and government structures of both states. Through security cooperation, Saudi Arabia and the United States can help each other protect against and diminish the threat that radical Islamism holds for both countries.

D. THE PETROLEUM-BASED ECONOMY

In recent years, the Saudi government, under the late King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, or King Abdullah, tried to confront political opposition by adjusting policies that directly affected jobs and the local economy. During the Arab revolts of 2011, the Saudi government increased pay for the entire public sector by 15 percent—an action that had many critics accusing the government of providing “handouts” to “buy off economic dissent.”²⁸¹ Whether these accusations hold any validity, Riyadh’s approach toward its domestic economy suggests that the government truly believes that political dissent cannot be curbed by adjusting its repressive policies but rather through employment and economic satisfaction. In May 2011, the Saudi government created the Nitaqat program, which provided incentives for businesses to hire Saudi citizens. In the spring of 2012, Riyadh provided a year’s worth of pay to over one million Saudi citizens equal to \$530 per month.²⁸²

Unless Saudi Arabia can find a long-term solution for the current economic challenges that it faces, King Abdullah’s efforts might be short-lived. The April 2015 International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook projected a 3.0 percent growth in GDP in 2015, down 0.6 percent from 2014, and the IMF predicts the growth

²⁸¹ “Throwing Money at the Street,” *Economist*, March 11, 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/18332638/print>.

²⁸² Donna Abu-Nasr, “Saudis Skip Arab Spring as Nation Pours Money into Jobs,” April 2, 2012, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-04-02/saudis-skip-arab-spring-as-nation-pours-money-into-jobs>.

rate to be only 2.7 percent for 2016.²⁸³ While this change in growth rate is largely attributable to a rebasing of real GDP data to 2010, the IMF projects that the recent global decrease in oil prices will cause Saudi Arabia to experience “substantial deficit” in its current account balance in 2016, moving from 14.1 percentage of GDP in 2014 to -1.0 percent in 2015 and rising only to 3.7 percent in 2016.²⁸⁴ While Saudi Arabia presently has the resources to support a global economy that is largely based on petroleum, actions of its competitors are driving the price of oil down, which means Saudi Arabia might have to explore other options other than simply pumping more money into its local economy and raising the salaries of its employees. For instance, the Saudi government might try investing in its people, not by increasing their pay but through emphasizing education and encouraging its citizens to transform its economy into one based on innovation and not one solely on natural resources.

Riyadh has seemed to recognize that its petroleum-based economy will not support its population forever. The Saudi government’s recent push for nuclear energy reveals that it recognizes the finiteness of its natural energy resource, but the country has also recently made great strides in demonstrating its commitment toward innovation through an emphasis on education. One example includes the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), a graduate university 90 kilometers north of Jeddah. King Abdullah founded the university in September 2009, stating that it should act as “a beacon for peace, hope, and reconciliation and shall serve the Kingdom and benefit all the peoples of the world.”²⁸⁵ The university’s stated vision is to be a “destination for scientific and technological education and research. By inspiring discoveries to address global challenges, [it strives] to serve as a beacon of knowledge that bridges people and cultures for the betterment of humanity.”²⁸⁶ Research departments at the university include Biological and Environmental Science and

283 International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook*, April 2015, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2015/01/>, 62–63.

284 Ibid.

285 King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, “About,” accessed July 5, 2015, <http://www.kaust.edu.sa/about-kaust.html>.

286 Ibid.

Engineering; Computer, Electrical and Mathematical Science and Engineering; and Physical Science and Engineering.²⁸⁷

Saudi Arabia's plan for emphasizing education and incorporating technical innovation into its economy dates further back than the creation of KAUST, however. In 1999, Riyadh issued a royal decree entitled The National Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation (NPSTI) in which the Saudi government instructed King Abdul-Aziz City for Science and Technology, the Ministry of Planning and other government and non-government agencies to develop a long-term framework that would incorporate "programs and projects of science and technology . . . inserted into the operational plans of government agencies."²⁸⁸ Programs like the NPSTI, the creation of King Abdullah University and other recent programs reveal that Saudi Arabia is attempting to shift its economy to one that will last by investing in its people through education and technical training.

E. HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights issues continue to complicate the U.S.-Saudi security relationship. Many U.S. citizens and journalists criticize Saudi Arabia's domestic policies regarding human rights, and this facet of the Saudi government has also crept into Washington's dialogue of U.S.-Saudi security relations. The stated mission of the U.S. Department of State includes the intention to "create a more secure, democratic and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people in the international community."²⁸⁹ Yet the robust economic and security relationship that the United States shares with Saudi Arabia seems to contradict this policy. Furthermore, the State Department openly acknowledges that Saudi Arabia fails to uphold the United States' definition of human rights within its borders. The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014" for Saudi Arabia accuses the Saudi government of the

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ "The National Plan for Science, Technology and Innovation," King Saud University, accessed July 5, 2015, <https://npst.ksu.edu.sa/en/node/463>.

²⁸⁹ "Mission," U.S. Department of State, accessed July 8, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/dosstrat/2004/23503.htm>.

following: “citizens’ lack of the ability and legal means to change their government; pervasive restrictions on universal rights such as freedom of expression...; and a lack of equal rights for women, children, and noncitizen workers.”²⁹⁰ The report also includes other instances in Saudi Arabia of “abuses of detainees; overcrowding in prisons and detention centers; investigating, detaining, prosecuting, and sentencing lawyers, human rights activists, and antigovernment reformists; holding political prisoners; denial of due process; arbitrary arrest and detention; and arbitrary interference with privacy, home, and correspondence.”²⁹¹

Professors at KAUST argue that by providing technical skills and scientific knowledge they are contributing to a gradual but definite transformation of Saudi society. In stark contrast to the rest of the country, KAUST “imposes no discrimination on the basis of sex, religion or ethnicity,” and, on campus, men and women are allowed to “mingle,” and women are permitted to drive.²⁹² Many critics remain skeptical over how much scientific education programs can actually have on major issues facing the people of Saudi Arabia, particularly in the area human rights. Some argue that Saudi Arabia’s academic community must do more than simply teach science and math and that a true state-wide change can only be brought about by open criticism of the government.²⁹³ Thus, far, the president of KAUST has remained silent on the recent Saudi arrest and harsh sentencing of political activist Raif Badawi for creating a political website. Raif’s punishment includes 10 years in prison and 1,000.²⁹⁴ Some of the university’s professors argue that true change can only be brought about through a slow process of education and research; many see KAUST’s inclusion of women as students as a major step toward achieving this objective. Other scientists at KAUST argue that human rights are a

²⁹⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014: Saudi Arabia,” Department of State, accessed July 8, 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/#wrapper>.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Declan Butler, “Saudi University Backs Slow Road to Modernization,” *Nature: International Weekly Journal of Science* 519, no. 5737 (February 3, 2015), <http://www.nature.com/news/saudi-university-backs-slow-road-to-modernization-1.16840>.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

prerequisite for scientific development, technology and creativity, and, if these things are to truly thrive in Saudi Arabia, as King Abdullah's wished, Saudi Arabia must first address its human rights issues.²⁹⁵

Riyadh's relatively strict implementation of Sharia law not only affects its relationship its people, but it also has a detrimental impact on its security partnership with the United States. Public support within the United States for a strong U.S.-Saudi partnership is fairly weak. U.S. media and human rights activists in the United States continuously emphasize their discontent over the United States' relationship with the kingdom, arguing that U.S. concerns for economic security and military defense have trumped efforts to promote global human rights.²⁹⁶ Even within Washington, members of Congress remain critical of the Saudi government for its repressive policies, accusing it of supporting religious extremism.²⁹⁷ While the United States has managed to overlook repression in the past when dealing with authoritarian regimes such as Saudi Arabia, as Saudi Arabia expands its economic partnerships and the United States decreases its dependency on oil imports, issues like human rights and political religious expression might play a stronger role in determining the course that the U.S.-Saudi security relationship may take in the near future.²⁹⁸ Human rights in Saudi Arabia remain a concern among both public activists and members of the government, but whether or not this concern will ever override other U.S. national security objectives remains unclear since it depends largely upon the greater economic, political and security environment of the two countries.

F. CONCLUSION

The issues confronting the U.S.-Saudi security relationship have changed since the 1960s. Although Iran has been a traditional rival of Saudi Arabia for centuries, the political situation in Iran is vastly different today than it was in the 1960s, and tensions

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ "Is the U.S. Pushing Saudi Arabia Enough on Human Rights?" *PBS Newshour*, January 27, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/u-s-pushing-saudi-arabia-enough-human-rights/>.

²⁹⁷ Blanchard, "Saudi Arabia," summary page.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

between Tehran and Riyadh are arguably much greater now due to Iran's increased potential to possess nuclear capabilities. Some parallels could be drawn to Russia's renewed regional aggression to the Soviet threat of the 1960s; however, today, Russia's competition with the United States over political and economic influence in Saudi Arabia has replaced the *ideological* communist threat. While shared fears of communism helped strengthen the relationship between Riyadh and Washington in the 1950s and 1960s, the recent Iran talks are arguably pushing Saudi Arabia toward Russia, as evidenced in the recent nuclear agreements between the two countries. Like the threat of communism in the 1960s, radical Islamism serves as a mutual threat to both the United States and Saudi Arabia, which is helping to strengthen the security partnership today, despite all the other issues it faces. As the United States decreases its dependency on foreign oil, the significance that oil has played in the security partnership in the past becomes dampened. These four issues affecting the U.S.-Saudi security partnership—Iran, Russia, radical Islamism and oil—are directly tied to U.S. security interests in the Middle East to varying levels of degrees. If the United States is to take an *analytical* approach to U.S. foreign policy, whether fully or partially, these issues should play into the decision-making processes of Washington. Finally, while the aforementioned four issues directly affect U.S. security interests in the Middle East, human rights are an issue of ideology. Whether human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia should affect the U.S.-Saudi security relationship depends on whether Washington chooses to incorporate an *ideological* approach into its foreign policy.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper seeks to explain the origins and development of the U.S.-Saudi security partnership from the late 1920s through the early 1960s and determine how it helped the United States reach its security goals during this time. In the introduction, I hypothesized that, in addition to oil, geostrategic interests played a major role in the development of the early U.S.-Saudi security partnership. My research reveals that Saudi Arabia's geostrategic value contributed to Washington's decision to expand upon existing economic ties with the kingdom and incorporate it into U.S. national security strategy during World War II and the early Cold War. My findings and analysis also lead me to conclude that security cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia helped the United States reach many of its security goals in the past. Moreover, this partnership proved productive regardless of whether the United States was using an *analytical* or *ideological* approach in its foreign policy. For example, cooperation with Saudi Arabia helped the U.S. exert its influence in the region during the Cold War, helping the United States achieve its *ideological* objective of communist containment. Additionally, military support for Saudi Arabia during the Yemeni Civil War helped the United States obtain its *analytical* objectives of maintaining regional stability and ensuring U.S. access to Middle Eastern oil. Understanding that security cooperation with Saudi Arabia can help the United States reach its security goals within the framework of both an *analytical* and *ideological* U.S. foreign policy strategy suggests that much value still exists in a partnership with the kingdom.

A. HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

There were two main reasons that U.S. presidents in the mid-twentieth century believed that Saudi Arabia's geographic location could help them reach their security goals. First, by using Saudi Arabian oil, the United States could continue to fuel its military while adhering to the guidelines laid out in Roosevelt's Foreign Petroleum Policy, which emphasized the use of oil in the Eastern Hemisphere to avoid depleting reserves in the West. Furthermore, the United States' oil economy and its military

security during the mid-twentieth century could be considered separate sides of the same coin. The U.S. military depended heavily upon oil to fuel its weapons systems, and, during this time, the United States sought switch its oil source from domestic to foreign, which included Saudi Arabia, while Saudi Arabia depended on the financial assistance and military protection of the United States. Second, Saudi Arabia provided a geostrategic advantage during the World War II and the Cold War. The kingdom's proximity to supply routes during World War II and its location relative to the Soviet Union during the Cold War led these administrations to push for increased security cooperation with Saudi Arabia. Roosevelt's Foreign Petroleum Act best highlights how these two drivers of the early U.S.-Saudi security relationship are immensely interconnected. Saudi Arabia's value to U.S. security was not just about its oil or its location; combined, these two characteristics made Saudi Arabia the perfect partner for U.S. security interests in the Eastern Hemisphere.

As U.S. foreign policy shifted its focus toward containing Soviet communism after World War II, the federal government continued to emphasize Saudi Arabia's value to U.S. security through the Truman Doctrine, resulting in the construction of Dhahran Airfield and the creation of the USMTM. As mentioned in Chapter I, Norman A. Graebner's argument that the U.S. officials took an *ideological* approach toward foreign policy after Woodrow Wilson's presidency is true for the United States and Saudi Arabia during the mid-twentieth century. The polarizing effects of the Soviet Union's antireligious communist doctrine helped unite the United States and Saudi Arabia against a common enemy, although religion served as more of a driving factor for Riyadh than Washington in this instance. Nonetheless, the Soviet communist threat continued to increase and enhance security cooperation between the United States and Saudi Arabia after World War II.

While President Truman made significant advances in projecting U.S. military power in the Middle East and Eurasia through Saudi Arabia's cooperation, his presidency also marked the beginning of tensions between Washington and Riyadh. Truman's forward leaning approach toward the Middle East incited Arab fears that U.S. Middle Eastern policy may have evolved into something no different than that of imperial

Europe. Increasing resentment toward the United States by the Arab world during the Eisenhower years and major events signifying that Arab nationalism had become the driving force in the Middle East led Eisenhower to adjust his foreign policy strategy near the end of his second term. Eisenhower's early achievements for the United States such as the USMTM and Dhahran Airfield represent a strategy of military presence and deterrence against possible Soviet aggression. By the late 1950s, Eisenhower had come to believe that the best strategy for combatting communism in the Middle East would be to influence the Arab nationalists, and his administration sought to do this by seeking stronger ties with Nasser.

President Kennedy continued Eisenhower's plan to pursue rapprochement with Nasser. By the time Kennedy entered office, *ideological* components of the two countries' domestic and foreign policies were posing serious challenges for the U.S.-Saudi security partnership. For the United States, the ineffectiveness of the Eisenhower Doctrine in Saudi Arabia drove Washington to center its foreign policy in the region around Nasser, King Saud's rival. For Saudi Arabia, pressure from Arab nationalists drove King Saud to try to put diplomatic space between Riyadh and Washington. Neither President Kennedy's nor King Saud's efforts to put distance between their countries had a lasting effect, however. The magnetic draw that the Yemeni conflict had on countries both inside and outside of the Middle East strengthened the U.S.-Saudi security relationship because it gave the two governments no other option but to work together. Nasser's actions in the conflict soured any of Kennedy's attempts at rapprochement toward the Egyptian government, and barely a year had passed after the transfer of Dhahran Airfield to the Saudi government before U.S. military aircraft were once again based in and operating out of Dhahran, flying missions to defend Saudi Arabia from Egyptian aggression. Despite Kennedy's attempts to relax U.S.-Saudi ties to pursue *ideological* objectives in the Middle East, his actions backfired, and Washington ultimately abandoned this strategy, albeit reluctantly, to protect its most valuable security partner in the Middle East at the time—Saudi Arabia.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have shared both an economic and security partnership for longer than Israel has existed as a modern state. While the U.S.-Saudi

relationship began over petroleum, mutual security needs throughout World War II and during the early part of the Cold War brought the two countries significantly closer together. When President Kennedy and King Saud tried to loosen this bond in the early 1960s, the Yemeni Civil War ultimately caused the security needs of both countries to trump any *ideological* goals that the two leaders might have had in the region, driving them to cooperate. President Kennedy originally hoped that Egypt, particularly Nasser, could be the new lynchpin for furthering U.S. interests in the Middle East, but when Nasser's actions during the Yemeni conflict proved disappointing and contrary to U.S. policy, Kennedy had little other option but to offer support to Saudi Arabia. Likewise, King Saud tried to quell the complaints of Arab nationalists in his country by taking control of Dhahran Airfield and making it a solely noncombatant-aircraft airfield. Within just slightly more than a year of acquiring the airfield, however, the Saudi king implored the United States for protection against Egyptian aggression, and Kennedy responded by deploying eight F-100D fighter aircraft to Dhahran.

B. TODAY

Today, the U.S.-Saudi security relationship remains strong in many respects. Security cooperation between the two countries includes regular participation in joint exercises in or around the Gulf, the continuation of the USMTM, military sales and U.S. assistance in security infrastructure.²⁹⁹ Similar to the early and mid-twentieth century, the United States and Saudi Arabia share mutual concerns about external security issues, and it is these concerns that drive the relationship's continuation. Several issues could affect the U.S.-Saudi security relationship in its present state. These issues include the Saudi-Iranian rivalry, a resurgence of Russian influence in the Eastern Hemisphere, radical Islamism, changing economies and the role of human rights in foreign policy.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the United States has demonstrated in recent years that it cannot only survive, but thrive on its domestic oil, both for local consumption and for its export economy. The boom in domestic oil production in the United States also

²⁹⁹ "Fact Sheet: United States-Saudi Arabia Bilateral Relationship," The White House, accessed July 7, 2015, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/03/28/fact-sheet-united-states-saudi-arabia-bilateral-relationship>.

suggests that the reservations Washington once held over the depletion of domestic oil reserves seem to have largely fallen by the wayside. Such a change could give one pause as to why the United States continues to pursue a security relationship with Saudi Arabia. However, early diplomatic relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia reveal that U.S.-Saudi cooperation can result in more than just energy security. During World War II and the early phases of the Cold War, the two countries developed a security relationship through military cooperation that continues to this day. Despite early friction between the two states such as Congress' suspicions of Saudi greed and Saudi concerns over U.S. imperialist motives, the geostrategic advantage that Saudi Arabia provided the United States and the financial and military support that the United States provided Saudi Arabia served the interests of both countries during the early to mid-twentieth century. While the political construct of the Middle East has changed since that time, many challenges to U.S. security remain tied to the region, including Iran, Russia and Islamist terrorism, and a strong continuing security partnership with Saudi Arabia could still continue to help the United States meet its current and future security objectives.

The *analytical* approach toward foreign relations that George Washington and other early U.S. leaders advocated regarding alliances—that they should be temporary and serve a specific, national interest—applies to the U.S.-Saudi relationship today. While technically not an alliance, the partnership that the United States shares with Saudi Arabia can help the United States reach its defensive security goals for the same reason that it did in the 1950s and 1960s—geostrategic advantage. While a strong partnership with a Middle Eastern country might seem contrary to a defensive strategy for the United States, the global security environment of today is also markedly different from 1796. Refugee crises, modern travel, social networking and weapons capabilities have allowed regional Middle Eastern conflicts to extend beyond the Middle East. For the United States to ensure its own security, it must reach out and pursue cooperation with states in this region. Through a security partnership with Saudi Arabia, the two countries can continue to help each other meet their security goals.

C. THE WAY FORWARD

The United States and Saudi Arabia cooperate in many areas other than security. Energy, education, citizen exchanges, science, technology, environmental and health programs are also a major part of U.S.-Saudi relations. Despite recent instances of energy cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Russia cited in Chapter III and other efforts made by Riyadh to vary Saudi Arabia's energy program, the United States and Saudi Arabia continue to share a strong energy partnership. This partnership extends beyond oil now—Saudi Arabia works with the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, in addition to participating in annual energy talks, to help develop alternative sources of energy such as solar and geothermal energy.³⁰⁰ The United States currently has roughly 80,000 Saudi students within its borders, which is the highest number of Saudi Arabian students the United States has ever had at one time.³⁰¹ In 2008, the United States and Saudi Arabia signed the U.S.-Saudi Science and Technology Agreement, which resulted in collaboration between the King Abdullah City of Science and Technology (KACST) and U.S. entities such as NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey. The United States and Saudi Arabia also work closely together in the field of medicine; Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collaborate to conduct research on a broad range of medical topics, which include breast cancer, diabetes, heart disease and infectious diseases.³⁰²

Today, one of the biggest tension points between the United States and Saudi Arabia is the issue of human rights as mentioned in Chapter IV. At some point, Washington will have to reconcile its stated objective of promoting human rights throughout the world to its continued military and financial support of Saudi Arabia. While cracks seem to be appearing in the strict policies of Saudi Arabia in cases like the KAUST, the State Department's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014" reveal that the kingdom still has a long way to go before it can be considered a desirable partner by many human rights advocates. Additionally, Washington must also

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

understand that it cannot expect every country with which it cooperates to strictly adhere to the United States' interpretation of how a country should be run at the domestic level, but, by the same token, the United States should refuse to tolerate glaring human rights abuses such as patterns of genocide and severe torture among its partners. This requires the United States to take both an *analytical* and *ideological* approach toward its foreign policy. Washington must decide at what threshold that it wants to hold its partners accountable for human rights abuses, but a threshold must exist. This thesis does not suggest that the United States should try to militarily enforce its domestic policies on any random country; however, the United States should disengage from those partners that exceed this chosen threshold after efforts have been made to curb these abuses. Further research and analysis could be conducted on how much emphasis the United States has truly put in both its dialogue and its cooperation efforts with Saudi Arabia in the area of reducing human rights abuses.

Finally, regarding the promotion of democracy in Saudi Arabia, the United States should tread carefully. The House of Saud has often proven to be a friend of the United States throughout several conflicts in the Eastern Hemisphere, including cases presented in this thesis and in others as well. While Saudi oil might not be as critical to U.S. leaders' national security strategy today as it was during the time of Roosevelt, Saudi Arabia can still play a crucial role in regional stability. The fall of several Middle Eastern regimes during the twenty-first century has resulted in chaos throughout much the region and created severe security threats not only for the United States and Saudi Arabia but also for much of the world. Thus far, the security relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia has in many ways helped each country achieve their security objectives, and, as long as Saudi Arabia remains a strong state, the partnership can continue to provide this effect. While the political situation of the Middle East continues to unravel in countries like Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen, Saudi Arabia remains a kingdom of relative political unity and stability, as it has for nearly a century. To ensure a future partnership that allows both states to meet their own interests requires that both U.S. and Saudi Arabian leaders remember how past events relate and apply to the changing the face of global security today.

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APPENDIX. TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS

Year	Event
1929	The Red Line Agreement is created
1932	SOCAL strikes oil in Bahrain
1933	Ibn Saud grants SOCAL first concessions
1938	SOCAL strikes oil in Dhahran; Ibn Saud grants company 440,000 square mile concession
1939	Anticipating World War II, Great Britain offers Saudi Arabia military protection
1941	CASOC appeals to President Roosevelt for assistance in meeting Ibn Saud's financial demands
	The United States enters World War II
1942	The United States opens legation at Jeddah
1943	President Roosevelt incorporates Saudi Arabia into Lend-Lease Act
1944	President Roosevelt articulates Foreign Petroleum Policy of the United States
1945	President Roosevelt and Ibn Saud meet onboard USS Quincy
	President Truman enters office
	World War II ends
1946	Dhahran Airfield is completed
1950	President Truman enacts the 50/50 Agreement
1951	The MDAA is created
1953	President Eisenhower enters office
	The USMTM replaces MDAA
	Ibn Saud dies; Saud bin Abdulaziz ascends the throne as King Saud
1955	Turkey, Iraq and Great Britain sign Baghdad Pact
1956	Suez Crisis
1957	The Eisenhower Doctrine is declared
1958	Egypt and Syria unite to form U.A.R.

Year	Event
1961	President Kennedy enters office
	King Saud announces nonrenewal of Dhahran Airfield agreement
	The U.A.R. dissolves
1962	The United States transfers Dhahran Airfield to Saudi government
	Yemeni Civil War begins
	Egypt begins conducting airstrikes against Najran
1963	United States sends tactical fighter aircraft to Dhahran Airfield to support Saudi Arabia
	President Kennedy is assassinated

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